

STARS AND STRIPES®

'04 wrestling champs out for respect

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Nader's LeRoyall Tull, top, and Patch's Nathan Buckley



CTC teacher says he'll settle suit for age discrimination

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Cosby won't be charged with sexual assault

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Bill Cosby

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005

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Bush to visit 1st AD during European trip

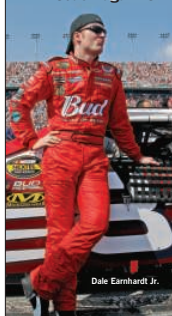
School, road, river closures among Wednesday's precautions

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Stability ahead after season of change in '04

Timeout magazine

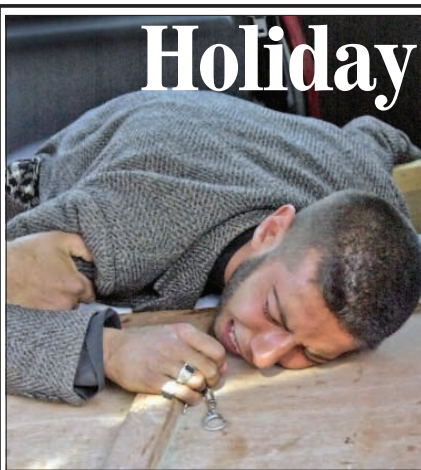


Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Holiday horror

5 Baghdad blasts kill 35 on eve of Shiite holy day

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AP photos

Left: Aqil, who gave only his first name, cries in grief on the lid of his brother Abu-Zainab's coffin at the al-Yarmouk hospital. Abu-Zainab was a victim of a blast at the al-Khadimain mosque. Four explosions aimed at Shiite worshippers and one at a police checkpoint rocked Baghdad on Friday, killing at least 35 people and injuring dozens, officials said, on the eve of Shiite Islam's most important holiday of Ashura. Right: A wounded man is treated at al-Yarmouk hospital after a suicide bomb blast Friday at the al-Khadimain mosque in the Dora neighborhood of Baghdad. Last year, 181 people were killed during a religious festival on the Ashura holiday.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Thatcher's legal woes: Sir Mark Thatcher left court Friday expressing confidence he had cleared away suspicions he had any role in a foiled coup plot featuring wealthy European financiers, soldiers of fortune and an African dictatorship.

"It is patently clear that I had nothing to do with financing any coup in Equatorial Guinea," the only son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told reporters outside a court in South Africa, his home since 1995.

North Korea energy supply: South Korea will start sending electricity across its heavily armed border next month to power a joint-venture industrial park in rival North Korea despite heightened nuclear tensions, officials said Friday.

Political tensions have overshadowed the venture's prospects after the North announced last week that it has nuclear weapons and is boycotting U.S.-sponsored disarmament talks aimed at quashing its nuclear ambitions.

On Friday, officials reaffirmed their commitment to the symbolic Kaesong project, saying the government-funded Korea Electric Power Corp. will start transmitting 15,000 kilowatts of electricity to the industrial complex in early March.

North Korea nuclear program: The United States and China agree that North Korea must end its nuclear ambitions and resolve the standoff through six-nation talks, Washington's top envoy on the issue said Friday, as efforts to restart the negotiations gained momentum.

Revising the stalled talks has taken on greater urgency since North Korea's explosive but unconfirmed declaration last week that it has become a nuclear power. The talks involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Russia and Japan.

North Korea "has made a big mistake in developing these nuclear programs ... and we are to help them overcome this mistake," U.S. envoy Christopher Hill said in Seoul after a visit to Beijing on Thursday to meet with Chinese officials.

American nun's murder: Brazil's president ordered the creation of a huge Amazon rainforest protection area in a lawless region coveted by soy farmers and ranchers less than a week after an American nun was gunned down trying to protect the jungle from deforestation.

Decreases signed Thursday by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will form a reserve of 8.2 million acres and a national park spanning 1.1 million acres in the eastern Amazon state of Para, where 73-year-old Dorothy Stang was shot to death in a dispute with a powerful rancher.

Fugitive war crimes suspect: The U.N. war crimes prosecutor said Thursday she has told the European Union that Croatia could arrest a fugitive suspect but doesn't want to — a claim that is certain to delay the start of the country's membership talks with the bloc.

In a letter to the EU presidency, leaked to the Jutarnji list daily, the chief prosecutor of the U.N. court, Carla Del Ponte, said Gen. Ante Gotovina, "is within reach of the Croatian authorities."

The Croatian authorities simply have not done everything in their power to arrest Ante Gotovina, although they certainly have tried to give the impression that they are



Croatian politics: Croatian President Stjepan Mesic, right, shakes hands with Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko after Mesic's inauguration ceremony at St. Mark Square in Zagreb, Croatia, on Friday. Mesic vowed to spend his second five-year term pushing for Western-style democracy in Croatia and reconciliation with wartime adversaries in the Balkans. But Mesic, the most vocal opponent in Croatia of the U.S. aid war in Iraq, also indirectly criticized President Bush's policies, saying: "The menace of global terrorism hangs over our present-day world, accompanied by risks stemming from not always suitable methods being employed in the fight against this evil."

making the maximum effort," Del Ponte said in the letter.

Business

Ex-WorldCom chief's trial: The star witness against former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers testified in New York on Thursday that a desire to meet Wall Street expectations eclipsed his own obligation to follow the law.

Scott Sullivan, who was finance chief under Ebbers, said he knew adjusting the books was illegal but did it anyway because "I thought we would make it through." Weinberger spent more than eight hours questioning Sullivan in his attempt to convince jurors that Sullivan, not Ebbers, was behind the \$11 billion accounting fraud at WorldCom.

States

Private planes near Washington: Lawmakers from across near the nation's capital have prodded federal officials to reopen Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport to private planes since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks without success, so one senator introduced a bill Thursday to speed up the process.

"I've been patient," said Sen. George Allen, R-Va. "The point of the matter is, nothing has happened, and I find that unacceptable."

National Airport was once a major destination for private flights in and out of the capital region, and officials estimate the ban on general aviation is costing the industry \$50 million each year.

Robert Blake's murder trial: Robert Blake had his head in his hands and was moaning the night his wife was slain, a fire captain testified, saying the actor's behavior was normal for someone involved in a traumatic event.

Kevin Bailey, a 24-year veteran of the Los

Angeles Fire Department, whose team was first to respond to the report of an assault near Vitoello's Restaurant on the night of May 4, 2001, said team members found Bobby Lee Bailey shot and Blake sitting on a curb.

Teen's banned yearbook photo: A hearing has been set for next month for a New Hampshire teenager suing to have his shot-gun in his high school yearbook portrait.

Lawyer Penny Dean, who represents Blake Douglas and his family, said she requested a speedy hearing ahead of the April 15 deadline for the Londonderry High School yearbook.

The case is being heard in U.S. District Court, where earlier this week Judge Steven McLaughlin refused to delay publication until the case is decided. In denying the request, McLaughlin dealt a blow to Douglas's case by asserting that students, not school administrators, made the decision to exclude the photo, which shows Douglas holding a broken-open shotgun draped over his shoulder.

Military

Failed ballistic missile test: An experimental ballistic missile interceptor failed to launch during a test Monday because of a problem with the retracting arms that hold it erect in the silo, the senior U.S. military man said Thursday.

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told members of Congress that a tiny switch controlling the arms had failed to close. The failure signaled that the arms had not come clear of the missile. "They don't think that's a systemic issue, but it's one they are going to have to deal with, nevertheless," Myers told a hearing of the House Defense appropriations subcommittee.

The failed test was the second since December for the multibillion dollar national missile defense program.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Correction

A story in Friday's editions about training Iraqis misspelled the last name of Lt. Gen. David Petraeus.

Note to readers

Tom Philpott's column will not be published in today's editions. Starting on Feb. 24, the column will appear on the Your Money page.

Wiesbaden, 1st AD prepare for Bush's visit

President to arrive on Wednesday

BY JESSICA INIGO

Stars and Stripes

President Bush will meet with soldiers of the 1st Armored Division in Wiesbaden on Wednesday.

Bush, who will be in Europe next week to meet with European officials, will make a stop at Wiesbaden Army Airfield on Wednesday afternoon, according to a 1st Armored Division news release.

It will be the second time that Bush has visited 1st AD troops. In 2003, he made a surprise visit to Baghdad to have Thanksgiving dinner with the soldiers.

"We are honored that the president and Mrs. Bush have chosen Wiesbaden to visit soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and family members of the U.S. European Command," Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, 1st AD commander, stated in a news release.

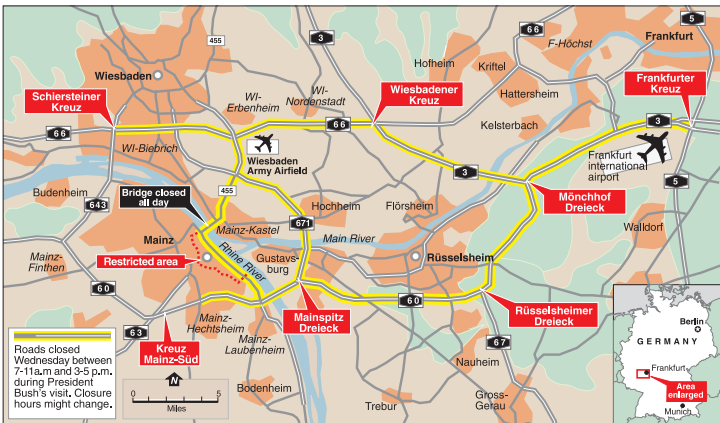
"I'm sure many Iron soldiers still remember with great pride the visit the commander-in-chief made to Baghdad to spend Thanksgiving with us during our deployment," Dempsey stated.

Earlier on Wednesday, Bush plans to meet with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The two leaders will greet American and German soldiers who have served in Afghanistan, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said Thursday during a press briefing.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr., and first lady Laura Bush will accompany Bush on his trip, according to the Rheinland-Palatinate state police. There will be enough other government officials to fill up a 12-car convoy, the police said.

Details on what the 1st AD is doing to prepare for the president's visit have not been released.

Major transportation routes around the Mainz-Wiesbaden area are being closed because of the president's visit. The closures — finalized and announced during a meeting Thursday — include:



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

■ A portion of Autobahn 60 from Anschlussstelle Mainz Süd to Rüsselsheimer Dreieck.

■ A portion of Autobahn 67 from Rüsselsheimer Dreieck to Mönchhofdreieck.

■ A portion of Autobahn A3 from Flughafen Frankfurt to Wiesbadener Kreuz.

■ A portion of Autobahn A66 from Wiesbadener Kreuz to Schiersteiner Kreuz.

Parts of A67 will be affected as well, according to officials from the Rheinland-Palatinate state chancellor's office.

The highways are scheduled to be closed from 7 to 11 a.m., and then again from 3 to 7 p.m. Those hours are subject to change.

The Rhein and Main rivers will be closed off in the area, as well as a 37-mile airspace radius above the communities.

German schools in the Mainz and Wiesbaden areas will be closed for the day, according to a statement issued by the Rhein-

land-Palatinate state chancellor's office.

The autobahn closures also will affect many on-base activities, said Donna Dean, spokeswoman for the 221st Base Support Battalion from Wiesbaden.

Lt. Col. Christopher Franks, 221st BSB commander, directed that many other facilities — such as the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, the dentist facility, the post office, the bank and the commissary — close on Wednesday.

He also has given the OK for all units to work with minimal staffing, because many soldiers or workers may not be able to get to work, Dean said.

AAFOS operations may or may not be open, depending on how many employees will be able to get to work, Dean said.

On the other hand, college students who attend night courses at the Gen. H.H. Arnold High

School or at the airfield will be affected, according to University of Maryland-Europe officials.

The North-Central Office, which covers the Wiesbaden area, has canceled all evening classes on Tuesday and Wednesday for the president's visit, according to Pete Haugland, the administrative assistant.

Wednesday's lunchtime classes will be canceled as well.

At least six demonstrations, both anti-U.S. and pro-U.S., are scheduled within Mainz during the president's visit, even though a large portion of the city will be off limits.

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President's itinerary

White House officials on Thursday released the following itinerary for President Bush's trip to Europe next week:

Sunday evening: President Bush and first lady Laura Bush will arrive in Brussels, Belgium.

Monday morning: Bush will meet with King Albert II and Queen Paola of Belgium, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium, and NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

Monday afternoon: Bush will deliver a speech on United States and European cooperation at the Concert Nobel in Brussels.

Monday evening: Bush will meet with French President Jacques Chirac.

Tuesday morning: Bush will meet with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Tuesday afternoon: Bush will hold a joint press conference with European leaders including European Council President and Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, and European Union Security Policy Representative Javier Solana.

Tuesday evening: Bush will participate in a working dinner with the European Union representatives.

Wednesday morning: Bush will travel to Mainz, Germany, to meet with Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and American and German soldiers who served in Afghanistan.

Wednesday afternoon: Bush will participate in a roundtable with German citizens and visit the Gutenberg Museum.

Wednesday evening: Bush and the first lady will travel to Wiesbaden, Germany, to meet with members of the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division, then travel to Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

Thursday morning: Bush will meet with Slovak Republic President Ivan Gašparovic and Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, and deliver a speech to Slovak citizens.

Thursday afternoon: Bush will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Thursday evening: Bush and the first lady will depart for Washington, D.C.

From staff reports

Busy schedule in store for first lady

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — First lady Laura Bush will visit with U.S. servicemen stationed in Germany and their children as she accompanies the president on his European visit next week.

Officials said the first lady will spend Tuesday visiting with troops and their families, starting with a tour of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl to meet with staff and wounded patients.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mrs. Bush is scheduled to speak to parents, teachers and students at Hainerberg Elementary School and General H. H. Arnold High School, both in Wiesbaden.



Laura Bush

The first lady has championed teacher recruitment programs in the United States, including the Troops for Teachers program, which encourages former servicemen to look at classroom careers. Mrs. Bush worked as a public school teacher and librarian before she married.

On Wednesday afternoon, both Mrs. Bush and the president are scheduled to travel to meet and thank members of the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division, stationed in Wiesbaden.

While President Bush meets with various European leaders during the week, Mrs. Bush also is scheduled to make public appearances with the first ladies of Germany, Russia and the Slovak Republic.

She will deliver a speech at the opening ceremony for the Bratislava University Library's InfoUSA Center in the Slovak Republic on Thursday. The new facility is designed to provide information on American history and culture.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@strips.osd.mil

New bonuses aim to lure more officers to reserves

\$6,000 being offered to active-duty officers, warrant officers for joining Guard, Reserve

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Working to correct a shortfall of captains in the reserve components that predates the war on terror, the Army is offering incentive bonuses to the general warrant and officer corps for the first time in modern history.

Two new, lump-sum \$6,000 bonuses are now in effect: an "affiliation" bonus for active-duty officers and warrant officers to prompt them to sign up for service with National Guard or Army Reserve, and an "accessions" bonus for some newly commissioned officers if they are in a critical specialty or agree to re-train into one after joining the reserve components.

Congress authorized the bonuses in the 2005 defense budget, according to Col. Mark Patterson, Officer Division chief in the Army's Directorate of Military Personnel Management.

The accessions bonus is reserved for individuals to be commissioned as officers, including enlisted personnel in all Army components who are eligible for an officer commission.

To be eligible for the \$6,000 bonus, individuals must attend either Officer Candidate School, a college or university's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program without a scholarship, or receive a direct commission without attending either program.

The law prohibits the Army from giving the \$6,000 to new officers with ROTC scholarships or

West Point degrees. Receiving a bonus on top of a taxpayer-funded education would be "double-dipping," Patterson said in a Thursday interview in his Pentagon office.

To get the bonus, eligible officers or officer candidates must also agree to specialize in a branch the reserve components have defined as "critical," finish Officer Basic Course in that branch and commit to serving in a reserve unit for six years, Patterson said.

The new affiliation bonus is open to all ranks, Patterson said, but is primarily designed to encourage all warrant officers and branch officers in the ranks of major and below and who are leaving active duty to join the National Guard or Army Reserve for at least three years instead of going into the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

The Army's IRR is made up of are soldiers who still have a legal obligation to serve in the military reserves, as well as officers who have not reached their retirement or resigned their commissions. IRR soldiers can be called up in case of national emergency, but they do not drill on a regular basis.

Officers in the IRR who have never served in the National Guard or Army Reserve also are eligible for the \$6,000 affiliation bonus, Patterson said.

For information on the accession bonus, please contact your military personnel office for the Army National Guard or U.S. Army Reserve. For information on the affiliation bonus, contact a reserve component career counselor, available at all Army transition centers.

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgess@stripes.osd.mil



PHOTOS BY RUSS RIZZO/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. David Miller, 32, of Tampa, Fla., kisses his 4-year-old son, Christian, while holding him. Miller returned home Friday from Iraq with the 66th Transportation Company.

Unit happy to be home after 13 months in Iraq

BY RUSS RIZZO

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Soldiers returning from Iraq bring Iraqi dinars, Iraqi "most wanted" playing cards, and all kinds of knickknacks gathered downrange.

Spc. Whitney Shaw brought back a bullet.

Shaw, a member of the 66th Transportation Company that returned from Iraq on Friday, carries the memento on a silver chain.

The brass bullet, fired from an AK-47, hit Shaw's left shoulder while she drove a tractor-trailer through an insurgent ambush in Mosul last week.

Her body armor stopped the bullet, leaving Shaw bruised and the bullet bent at the tip.

"It's kind of a good luck charm now," said Shaw, a 19-year-old Tampa, Fla., resident.

Insurgent attacks were a daily reality for the 142 members of the 66th Transportation Company who returned after more than a year in Iraq.

In December, family members in Germany were told the unit's deployment would be extended for five weeks so the company could bolster U.S. forces for Iraq's Jan. 30 election.

On Wednesday morning, the soldiers returned to a gym full of loved ones at Kieker Casern. Stationed in Tikrit, the soldiers drove supplies as far north as the Syria-Turkey border and as far south as Umm Qasr, near the Kuwait border, with many stops in between.

In 13 months, two soldiers from the company were killed and 12 others were injured, said Capt. Samuel Pena, the company's commander. Sgt. Tatjana Reed, 34, and Spc. Torey J. Dantzer, 22, died July 22 when a roadside bomb destroyed their armored Humvee in Samarra.

On Aug. 4, 66th Transportation Company soldiers came under the heaviest attack of the year as they drove through Mosul.

"It was just like we were in 'Black Hawk Down,'" said Spc. Marshall Wright, a mechanic from Belen, N.M., referring to the book and movie about a downed helicopter in Somalia.

"It came from all around," Belen, who rode in the convoys, said at the attack.

Insurgents choked off a main route through Mosul and engaged members of the Stryker Brigade in a firefight when the 66th Transportation Company's convoy rolled through.

The bullet that hit Shaw came through an open passenger window.

Drivers kept their windows open because there was no air conditioning in the trucks, Shaw said. Besides, leaving them up would do little to protect them. The tractor-trailers had no bulletproof glass.

At the start of the war, the Army had not planned to armor its tractor-trailers, Pena said. But plans changed when insurgents began using larger roadside bombs and detonating them more often, he said.

All of the company's trucks were armored by the end of August, eight months after the company arrived in Iraq, Pena said. The trucks still have no bulletproof glass, he said.

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Souvenir shopping in Bosnia



IVANA AVRAMOVIC/Courtesy of U.S. Army

Spc. Keynan Santos, of Task Force Cyclone, and Spc. Erin Finkle, of Task Force Orion, look at a guitar-like instrument at the Eagle Base, Bosnia and Herzegovina, concessions mall. Santos was doing some souvenir shopping before heading home. Troops with Task Force Cyclone of Indiana National Guard have been deployed in Bosnia since March and will soon return home. The incoming Task Force Orion of California National Guard will take over NATO's Enduring Mission in the country.

Aviano principal wins DODDS-Europe honor

McEnery named system's top principal

By KENT HARRIS

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Doug McEnery flashes a smile when asked about what appears to be a trend at Aviano High School.

Susan Page, the school's assistant principal, was named the best at her job for the entire Department of Defense Education Activity last year. Now McEnery has been named the top high school principal for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe.

"It's the water," said the 54-year-old, whose been working in the military schools system for almost 25 years.

"I think we have a great school," McEnery said. "I've got great teachers. They really work well together. I think that's one of the reasons for success at our school."

McEnery, who arrived in Aviano in 1999 after almost two decades at schools in Germany and Japan, is one of those teachers himself. He co-teaches a college prep class with Alan Scharf.

McEnery says that being a principal of a small school — Aviano's official enrollment is 285 — allows him to spend some time in the classroom. That, in turn, might help him relate better to his teachers.

"We regularly meet to see how we can do a better job," he said. "That includes me. And I think that efforts pays off."

Page, who also credited her award to the staff and students at the school, said McEnery has been a good mentor.

"I learn something from him all the time," she said. "One of his strengths is he's a really good listener."

McEnery started honing that skill early on in his DODDS career. He earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of Kansas while working at his first teaching job in Oskaloosa, Kan.

McEnery came to the American school at Hahn Air Base in Germany in 1980 as a counselor, holding that position for eight years before becoming the school's assistant principal. He then went to Berlin as assistant principal and helped close that school. McEnery spent two years at



KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Aviano High School's Doug McEnery, named DODDS-Europe high school principal of the year, makes a point while teaching a class this week.

Vielse before getting his first principal's job at Yokota Air Base in Japan. That school had more than 700 students, so coming to Aviano was an adjustment.

"I'm very happy here," he said. "I get to know all the kids by name, and they know me by name, because the numbers are smaller."

Students' achievement test scores at Avi-

ano also generally are above school goals, he said, adding that those results and high marks from inspections probably helped him receive the award.

He attributes those successes to the students and staff.

"I'm lucky enough to get credit for it," McEnery said.

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German teacher to settle in CTC age discrimination case

By KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

A Central Texas College teacher who filed a federal lawsuit against the institution alleging age discrimination said he would drop his suit and accept an out-of-court settlement.

Gerhard Reissig, a German Headstart teacher, didn't disclose details of the settlement but said it would include a cash amount enough to cover his legal fees and back pay. In exchange, Reissig would resign his post as a part-time teacher after more than six years on staff.

"I have to settle out of court," Reissig said Wednesday. "There is no other way."

A preliminary settlement was to be signed by both sides this week, according to Reissig.

Fred J. Osterag, dean of the European operation for CTC, was in a telephone interview

Wednesday that he knew nothing of the pending agreement.

"That's news to me," Osterag said.

An attorney for the college declined to comment on the settlement, saying she had not spoken with her client.

The Army veteran's 2002 two-year battle with Central Texas College began as a dispute over hourly wages. Reissig said officials unjustly cut his hourly salary when they reversed a previous decision to pay him more for prior teaching experience. When he complained, he said, the college retaliated, taking steps that ultimately cost

him the logistical support he received from the college.

Reissig's lawsuit claimed preferential treatment was given to younger teachers. In the end, however, Reissig said he and his lawyers felt they probably didn't have enough evidence to prevail in court.

Reissig, 57, characterized the dispute with CTC as "a night-mare," and he still maintains officials were "screwing with his pay" in a disparaging way for discriminatory reasons.

Reissig taught his final German Headstart course — mandatory for all incoming troops — last week. As one of the course's original instructors, Reissig indicated he will miss teaching the 30-hour introductory course on German culture.

"Obviously," Reissig said, the ordeal has left "a bad taste in my mouth."

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Plan to slow shipbuilding worries U.S. lawmakers

By LIZ SIDOTI

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush's plan for the Navy calls for buying fewer ships, while China, a potential security hot spot, is increasing and repositioning its fleet. It's a prospect that concerns some U.S. lawmakers.

The plan is contained in Bush's 2006 budget proposal, which U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on Thursday defended, saying the military was closely watching China's moves but that the U.S. Navy remains the pre-eminent fleet.

"The United States Navy ... is the Navy on the face of the earth that is a true blue water navy," Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "On the other hand, when one looks at trend lines, it is something that we have to think about."

The Pentagon says buying fewer ships than previously

planned won't affect combat ability. Previous budgets envisioned purchasing six Virginia-class attack submarines, seven DDXO destroyers and 10 San Antonio-class amphibious landing ships through 2011. The 2006 budget calls for three submarines, five destroyers and nine landing ships. It also proposes eliminating one of the Navy's 12 aircraft carriers.

Republicans and Democrats argued that cutting back now could jeopardize the Navy's long-term domination of the seas, particularly in light of China's military improvements.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins, whose state of Maine hosts the Bath Iron Works, one of the Navy's largest ship builders, expressed her reservations to Rumsfeld.

"I recognize that our naval fleet still remains the most technologically advanced in the world. But the decreasing number of ships being procured, particularly in the light of the Chinese buildup, really concerns me," she said.

Draft would not improve quality of military, Army's top recruiter says

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A military draft would not improve the quality of soldier over the current all-volunteer force, the head of Army recruiting said Thursday.

Maj. Gen. Michael D. Rochelle, commanding general of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command at Fort Knox, said volunteer soldiers want to be a part of the military, making them "as wonderful a soldier as one can imagine."

"I think what we have today far surpasses a draft," he told a 7,000 Army audience. Rochelle, 54, oversees 7,000 Army recruiters worldwide and has a \$20 million advertising budget with a goal of bringing in 80,000 new soldiers this year. It's a daunting task, he said.

A good economy and a falling unemployment rate mean fewer people are looking for jobs. "Recruiting is a challenge in the best of times," he said. "We're competing with industry."

Nevertheless, the Army expects to meet its recruiting goals for 2005, he said, noting the targeted recruiting age range — those between 17 and 24 — are "joiners" willing to serve.

"They're civic-minded," Rochelle said. "They recognize the threat very well that Sept. 11 poses."

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, testified before the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday he expects recruiting in 2005

to be "very challenging" for both active duty soldiers and reserves, particularly the Army Reserve.

"We are increasing the numbers of recruiters and restructuring enlistment bonuses to help mitigate these challenges," Myers told the congressional committee.

The Army is also partnering with business or municipal agencies by offering soldiers whose enlistments are completed "priority interviews" with companies taking part in the program, Rochelle said.

At least 35 killed in pre-holiday bombings

BY PATRICK QUINN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Five explosions shattered Shiite holiday commemorations in Iraq on Friday, killing at least 35 people, officials said, in the deadliest day of violence since Iraq's landmark elections last month.

Suicide bombers struck at two Shiite mosques after Friday prayers ended, another explosion occurred near a Shiite religious procession and a fourth attack, also carried out by a suicide bomber, blasted an Iraqi police and National Guard checkpoint in a Sunni neighborhood.

A fifth attack, a car bomb in the southern town of Iskandariyah, left at least seven people dead and 10 wounded outside a Shiite mosque, doctors said. The blast took place at about 7 p.m. in the predominantly Shiite town, 30 miles south of Baghdad.

The attacks recalled bombings on the Ashoura holiday a year ago that killed at least 181 during the religious festival.

In northern Iraq, meanwhile, three American soldiers were killed in separate attacks on Wednesday and Thursday, the U.S. military said.

The bloodshed began when a bomber entered the vestibule of al-Khadimain mosque in the Iraqi capital's Doura neighborhood as worshippers inside knelt in prayer, then detonated his explosives, said a witness, Hussein Rahim Qasim.

Shortly afterward, a bomb exploded outside the al-Bayaa mosque in a predominantly Shiite neighborhood in western Baghdad.

The first explosion killed 15 and the second killed 10, an official at Baghdad's al-Yarmouk Hospital said on condition of anonymity. About 30 were wounded at both mosques.

Less than an hour later, an explosion near a religious procession of Shiites marking Ashura northwest of the city center killed two and injured five, according to Iraqi police Lt. Wad Hussein.

The fourth attack was at the checkpoint in northern Baghdad's neighborhood of al-Adamiyah. An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw one dead police officer and two wounded civilians.

Shiites packed into mosques Friday to mark the eve of Ashoura, the 10th day of the Islamic holy month of Muharram and the holiest day of the year for them.

Ashoura marks the death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, in a 7th century battle for leadership of the Islamic world.

The imam at al-Khadimain mosque used the minaret's loudspeakers to appeal for blood donations, said 1st Lt. Ahmad Ali,



A young boy stands outside a building damaged by an explosion near an Ashoura procession in the Shiite Ash Shulah district of Baghdad on Friday. Four explosions aimed at Shiite worshippers ripped through Baghdad during Friday prayers, killing at least 28 people on the eve of Shiite Islam's holiday of Ashoura.

who added that a suicide bomber was behind the blast.

Quick action from a security guard at the al-Bayaa mosque may have prevented more bloodshed. Amer Mayah said he opened fire on a man — apparently a second suicide attacker at the mosque — who was trying to get two grenades from his pocket, "and immediately he exploded."

There were no immediate claims of responsibility, but Iraqis blamed radical Sunni Muslims insurgents, who have staged car bombs, shootings and kidnappings to try to destabilize Iraq's reconstruction and provoke a sectarian civil war between Shiites and Sunnis.

One soldier was shot in Mosul in a small-arms attack Thursday, the military said. West of Mosul, a soldier was killed and another was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded while they were on patrol in Tal Afar, the military said.

Another assault in Mosul on Wednesday took the life of third U.S. soldier, who died in a car bomb attack while patrolling the volatile city. Three other soldiers were wounded in that blast.

The deadly explosions came as Iraq partially sealed its land borders as part of stepped up security on the eve of the holiday, hoping to avert a repeat of last year's bloodshed.

Land borders were partially closed from Friday to Tuesday, said Thair al-Naqeeb, a spokesman for the interim prime minister.

Exceptions include trucks carrying food or oil. Baghdad's international airport will remain open for flights, al-Naqeeb and aviation industry officials said.

In the southern city of Karbala, where Ashoura celebrations will be centered, police found the bodies of two police officers, both the sons of the chief of police of Najaf, another southern Shiite city, said Karbala police spokesman Rahman Mushawi. It was not clear who killed the two.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, at least 1,471 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,113 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 12 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,333 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,004 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ One U.S. soldier was killed Wednesday by a car bomb while on patrol in Mosul, Iraq.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Pfc. David J. Branganman, 20, Lake Worth, Fla.; died Sunday in Uvan, Iraq, when a mortar round struck his vehicle; assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

■ Army Sgt. Adam J. Plumondore, 22, Gresham, Ore.; died Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq, when a car bomb detonated near his vehicle; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class David J. Salie, 34, Columbus, Ga.; died Monday in Baquba, Iraq, when his vehicle was hit by an explosive; assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga.

Noncombat deaths

February is on pace to surpass most recent months in the number of U.S. soldiers killed in noncombat accidents and other noncombat incidents.

U.S. military deaths in Iraq from vehicle accidents and other non-combat incidents



SOURCE: Defense Department

AP

Accidental military deaths in Iraq rising

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. troops in Iraq have suffered a rash of fatal vehicle accidents and other noncombat deaths in recent weeks, even as the number killed in insurgent attacks has declined.

Although details of recent accidents have not been made public, some officials believe the jump in their number can be explained in part by turbulence from the troop rotation that is now approaching its peak, with tens of thousands of troops arriving and like numbers going home.

"The sheer volume of soldiers on the ground and high volume of vehicular traffic may reflect a

higher rate of individual accidents or nonbattle injuries," said Maj. Richard Goldenberg, spokesman for the 42nd Infantry Division of the New York Army National Guard, which is commanding a mixed Guard/regular Army task force responsible for an area of north-central Iraq.

There currently are about 155,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, according to the U.S. military command in Baghdad. That is the highest number of the entire war, including the initial invasion.

The number of troops is expected to drop to about 135,000 over the next month or two as units that complete their one-year tours of duty in Iraq pack up and head for home. Some were held

beyond their planned departure dates in order to provide extra security in advance of the Jan. 30 election.

In the first 16 days of February, there were 14 noncombat deaths, compared with 16 combat deaths.

January had the highest number of accidental or other nonhostile deaths for any month of the war, with 51. That included 30 Marines and one Navy corpsman killed in a single helicopter crash, on Jan. 26. Even setting that accident aside, the Army alone had 18 non-combat deaths in January, the most for any month of the war except August 2003, when it reported 22.

January also had 47 combat deaths, down from 57 in December and 125 in November.

Although U.S. deaths in insurgent attacks have declined the past two months, the number of attacks has not. The U.S. military command in Baghdad said Thursday that in the two weeks since the Jan. 30 election there have been 1,012 insurgent attacks, compared with 1,876 from Jan. 1-29.

The spike in nonhostile deaths in January and February coincides with the troop rotation, which began in its peak stage last fall but reached its snail pace over the past two months. The last time there was a notable increase in non-combat deaths was during the previous troop rotation — in February and March of 2004, according to Pentagon casualty statistics.

IN THE WORLD

U.S. research ship runs aground on reef in Mexico

BY MARK STEVENSON
The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — In a significant embarrassment for American scientists, a U.S. research vessel conducting controversial sound-wave research off Mexico's Gulf coast faces heavy fines for running aground on a coral reef.

Mexican authorities announced on Thursday that the U.S. National Science Foundation ship Maurice Ewing hit a reef about 30 miles off the Yucatan peninsula on Monday, even though the reef was clearly marked on maps.

Mexican Attorney General for Environmental Protection Jose Luis Luege said the ship could be seized temporarily to ensure the fine is paid.

The ship is using sound waves to search for traces of an asteroid that may have wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

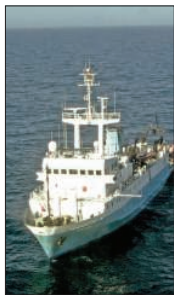
"The fines will be based on the amount of damage done," said Mexico's Attorney General for Environmental Protection, Jose Luis Luege. "I can't say offhand what the fine will be, but it will be sizable."

The research project had already raised the hackles of environmental activists, who say the technology could harm sea life.

The Monday accident, which authorities did not confirm until Thursday, fueled activists' opposition to the Maurice Ewing.

"They said they had state-of-the-art technology and highly trained personnel, but they couldn't even detect a coral reef?" said Rosario Sosa, president, Association for the Rights of Animals and their Habitat.

The environmental protection agency called the accident "inexplicable," noting the reef is clearly marked on charts of the area. Officials with Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, which operates the Maurice Ewing, had no immediate comment on the accident.



The Maurice Ewing research vessel hit a reef about 30 miles off the Yucatan peninsula on Monday. The U.S. research vessel faces heavy fines for running aground on a coral reef.

The Mexican government said the accident affected about 20 square yards of underwater coral formations and about 10 square yards of coral. "It takes coral a hundred years to grow one meter, so ten meters, that's like a thousand years lost," Sosa said.

Barroso: EU, U.S. must act together

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said Thursday that Europe and the United States can only expect to resolve global crises if they act closely together.

"The challenges are so huge that we cannot solve them alone," Barroso said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He called for a "political commitment" to work together on issues such as ensuring Iran does not develop nuclear weapons, mediating between Israel and the Palestinians and curbing global warming.

"What we want to see clarified [is], are we — yes or no — interested in some kind of global partnership between the Europeans and the United States?" Barroso said.

"I think we should insist on that, not only because it's in the interest of the Europeans, not only because it's in the interest of the United States — but the international community," Barroso said.

Barroso and Bush will hold talks on Tuesday during the U.S.

president's trip to Europe. They will discuss issues ranging from trade, Iran and Iraq to the EU's contentious plans to drop its 15-year old arms embargo against China — which is strongly opposed by Washington.

Barroso acknowledged that the European Union and Washington at times took "different approaches" including on how to deal with Beijing.

He assured Washington that lifting the embargo could be done "through a code of conduct that is precise, binding and serious."

"Of course the interest of the European Union and the United States is not arms proliferation in that part of the world," said Barroso. "Even if we do not agree, we should not let one issue contaminate all the other issues where we do have an agreement."

Barroso said he saw a "a will to put behind us some differences" such as France and Germany's staunch opposition to the U.S.-led war in Iraq, and also the recent agreement by both sides to resolve the fight over subsidies to U.S. and EU airline makers Boeing and Airbus through negotiations and not through a trade war.

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Drive Into Your Dreams

Lebanon: Hariri's killers will be caught

By PAUL GARWOOD
The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Lebanon's pro-Syrian president vowed Friday to hunt down the killers of former premier Rafik Hariri amid wide speculation over the involvement of this country's Damascus-backed government in the assassination.

President Emile Lahoud's commitment came during a condolence visit to his slain rival's home and amid Lebanese government efforts to keep control of the murder investigation, despite calls by Hariri's family and the United States and France for a foreign-led inquiry.

No credible claims of responsibility have emerged since Monday's bombing, which killed Hariri and 16 others. Lebanese have little confidence in an investigation led by their own government in light of its history of being unable to track down those responsible for past political assassinations.

Thousands of Lebanese have signed a 30-year-long banner with the word "Resign" written in French and Arabic, which has been unfurled at Hariri's grave outside the towering downtown Beirut mosque he built. The popular calls for Prime Minister Omar Karami's government to resign are the first since 1992, when riots forced Karami, who led the government then, to step down.



Lebanese girls light candles Friday at the grave of Lebanon's slain former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, in Beirut, Lebanon.

They also increase pressure on the government, which many accuse of involvement in Hariri's killing, and its main power-broker Syria, which also has been linked to the attack and is facing renewed U.S. and French calls to withdraw its 15,000 soldiers from Lebanon — a source of resentment for many Lebanese.

Both Syrian and Lebanese governments have denied involvement and have instead condemned the killing of Hariri, a popular, self-made billionaire who many here credit with rebuilding the country following the devastating 1975-90 civil war.

"The president of the republic stressed to the family of the martyr [Hariri] that the investigation is ongoing to uncover the circumstances of the ugly crime," according to a

statement released by Lahoud's office following the meeting with Hariri's two eldest sons, Bahaa and Saadeddine.

The statement added that all clues are being followed that "might lead to identifying those quarters that planned and executed the crime against the martyr of Lebanon and his companions."

Thousands of mourners, including those from Lebanon's Christian Armenian community, prayed at Hariri's grave Friday as Muslims gathered around Beirut for the main mosque prayer service of the week.

Lebanon reopened for business following three days of national mourning, with shops and cafes doing a brisk trade and bustling traffic returning to the streets.

Associated Press correspondent Bassem Mroue contributed to this report in Beirut.

Britain food scare

LONDON — Britain's Food Standards Agency triggered an international food safety alert Friday on a batch of sauce that was contaminated with a dye linked to cancer.

The sauce containing the dye Sudan I was used in a number of British foods and exported to several European and Caribbean countries and to North America.

The agency used the rapid alert system for food and feed, or RASFF, to send out an alert across Europe, and then to the United States and other countries.

Orthodox sex scandals

ATHENS, Greece — Greece's powerful Orthodox Church, rocked by sex and corruption scandals, held an emergency meeting Friday aimed at making wide ranging reforms.

The 102-member Holy Synod is holding two days of meetings that will look at introducing stronger controls over church finances, a rare move by church leader Archbishop Christodoulos.

The full Synod normally meets every October.

"I humbly ask for forgiveness from the people and the clerics who in their majority have caused this crisis," Archbishop Christodoulos said in his opening statement, as quoted by state-run television.

Democracy riots

KATMANDU, Nepal — Police arrested 57 opposition protesters Friday, while the royal government plunged Nepal into a communications blackout, citing phone service to thwart efforts to organize nationwide rallies against the king's seizure of power.

In the capital, Katmandu, the call for demonstrations to recognize Democracy Day went largely unheeded. Opponents had called the rally as a first show of defiance since King Gyanendra seized power on Feb. 1.

Eight people were arrested in Katmandu, and at least 36 in Jankapur town and 13 in the Himalayan resort town of Pokhara, police said.

Putin backs Iran

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that he is convinced Iran is not seeking to develop nuclear weapons and announced plans to visit the country, showing strong support for Tehran a week before a summit with President Bush.

Iran's insistence that it does not want nuclear weapons starkly contradicts U.S. suspicions about the intentions of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which Bush has labeled part of an "axis of evil" seeking weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorists.

From The Associated Press

Pope's newest book reflects on shooting

The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Pope John Paul II for the first time publicly described the moments after he was gravely wounded in 1981, saying in his new book that he was fearful and in pain but had "a strange feeling of confidence" that he would live.

In the book, a copy of which was obtained Thursday by The Associated Press, the Polish pontiff also said his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, "understood that above his power — the power of shooting and killing — there is a greater power."

In "Memory and Identity: Conversations Between Millennials," the pope said he remembered being rushed to the hospital but didn't recall much of what happened after he arrived because "I was almost on the other side."

"Oh, my Lord! This was a difficult experience. I woke up the



John Paul II

next day, around noon," John Paul wrote.

The book, his fifth, is essentially a transcript of conversations he had in Polish with his close friends political philosopher Krzysztof Michalski and the late Rev. Jozef Tischner in 1993 at his summer residence near Rome. It will be published Wednesday in Italy by Rizzoli, which also plans an English version soon.

In it, the pope reflected on a range of topics and broadly comments on the Holocaust, saying both derived from governments in conflict with God's laws.

The most personal section of the book contains John Paul's recollections of how his faith sustained him after being shot in the abdomen by the Turkish gunman on May 13, 1981, while riding in an open car in St. Peter's Square.

"Yes, I remember that journey to the hospital," he wrote.

"I remained conscious for some time after. I had a feeling that I would survive. I was in pain. I had reason to be afraid, but I had this strange feeling of confidence."

John Paul recalled his belief that the bullet was steered away from vital organs by divine intervention.

Police question seven about alleged ties to IRA financing

The Associated Press

DUBLIN, Ireland — Detectives interrogated seven people Friday — including a Sinn Féin activist and a private banker linked to one of Ireland's most prominent dealmakers — on suspicion of running a major IRA money-laundering operation.

In Dublin, senior police officers and forensic specialists from both parts of Ireland assessed whether any of the more than \$4.75 million seized in police raids nationwide Wednes-

day night and Thursday had been stolen from the Northern Bank in Belfast.

That mammoth Dec. 20 heist of a world-record \$50 million, allegedly orchestrated by the Irish Republican Army, has sent shock waves through Northern Ireland's decade-old peace process.

Among those in custody were Tom Hanlon, 38, an organizer for the IRA-linked Sinn Féin party, who was arrested at his home in Passage West, County Cork, and Ted Cunningham and Irene Johnstone, a Cork couple in

their mid-50s who are co-directors of two small financial companies.

Police identified the other four men — one arrested Thursday in Cork and three others Wednesday night near a Dublin station in alleged possession of suspected members or money-launderers of the Provisional IRA, the outlawed group's full name.

Police said they found no illicit money at the home of Hanlon, a house painter who in 2002 unsuccessfully ran for a seat in Irish parliament on the Sinn Féin ticket.



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IN THE STATES



President Bush answers questions from the media in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building at the White House on Thursday.

President promises to protect Israel from Iran

BY JENNIFER LOVEN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush criticized Syria and Iran as destabilizing forces in the Middle East but stopped short of threatening new U.S. action against either. Expressing sympathy with Israeli worries about a nuclear-armed Iran, the president said America would protect its ally.

Bush on Thursday said Syria was "out of step" with progress being made in the Mideast. The president cited the 15,000 troops that Syria has in Lebanon and accused Syria of harboring terrorist groups and assisting Iraqi insurgents.

He did not assert involvement by Syria, as many suspect, in the assassination this week of a former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

"I'm going to withhold judgment until we find out what the facts are," Bush said at a news conference where he announced the appointment of John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, as director of national intelligence.

Going over one global hot spot after another, the president repeatedly chose the language of negotiation over intimidation.

He did say that "some of the behavior in the Middle East is unacceptable" — a reference to Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons and support by Iran and Syria of terrorist organizations.

But Bush emphasized diplomatic solutions. "There's a lot of progress that can be made," he said.

Bush dodged several questions about potential new penalties against Syria. "The idea is to continue to work with the world to remind Syria it's not in their interest to be isolated," he said.

His approach contrasted sharply with that recommended by a bipartisan group of 11 senators, who urged Bush to expand on trade penalties and to "take strong action" against Syria. "Neither the U.S. nor our allies can afford to let Syria off the hook," the lawmakers said in a letter Thursday.

Bush reaffirmed that Iran is not now in danger of a U.S. attack, despite the administration's belief that Tehran is developing nuclear weapons; Iran denies that charge. "There's more diplomacy, in my judgment, to be done," the president said.

Asked about his level of concern that Israel might attack Iran to prevent its Tehran from acquiring nuclear arms, Bush responded with an assurance to Israel of U.S. protection.

"If I was the leader of Israel and I'd listened to some of the statements by the Iranian ayatollahs that regarded the security of my country, I'd be concerned about Iran having a nuclear weapon as well," he said. "We will support Israel if her security is threatened."

Bishops report 1,092 new claims of abuse

BY RACHEL ZOLL
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's Roman Catholic bishops said Friday that over the last year they received 1,092 new allegations of sexual abuse against at least 756 Catholic priests and deacons.

Half of the accused priests over the past year had been previously accused of abuse, said Kathleen McChesney, executive director of the bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Most of the alleged incidents occurred decades ago: 72 percent of the priests were either dead, defrocked or removed from public ministry before the newest allegations were received, McChesney said.

The information came as the bishops released a new national audit of U.S. dioceses to determine how well they've complied with the child protection policy American prelates instituted more than three years ago at the height of the clergy molestation crisis.

Teams of auditors, comprised mainly of former FBI agents, completed data in visits to dioceses across the country.

The auditors found that more than 95 percent of dioceses have taken the required steps to keep children safe.

But the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests said the audits were "minimal and misleading," contending bishops had too much control over who participated in the review.

The report is the latest in a series the bishops commissioned to restore trust in their leadership after the clergy molestation crisis erupted in the Archdiocese of Boston and spread nationwide.

Last year, the bishops released an unprecedented statistical review that found 4,392 priests had been accused of molesting minors in 10,667 cases between 1950 and 2002.

A first series of audits, also released a year ago, found 90 percent of the 195 U.S. dioceses were fully compliant with the child protection policy the bishops adopted under intense public pressure in June 2002. But auditors also found shortcomings in the reforms, such as ineffective monitoring of guilty priests.

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Rehnquist to miss Supreme Court arguments

WASHINGTON — Ailing Chief Justice William Rehnquist will be absent from the bench when the Supreme Court resumes for the second half of its term next week, the court announced Friday.

The 80-year-old Rehnquist, battling thyroid cancer, plans to skip the two-week cycle of oral arguments that starts Tuesday, court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said. He will continue reading transcripts of the arguments and voting on decisions, she said.

Rehnquist has been working mainly from home since Oct. 22, when he was hospitalized and then underwent a tracheotomy to help him breathe. He made his first public appearance last month at the presidential inauguration, appearing fragile as he delivered the oath of office.

Rehnquist's illness has led to speculation that he will step down, giving the court its first opening since 1994. While such an announcement could come at any time, justices typically wait until the term ends in June to leave to avoid an extended vacancy and the possibility of 4-4 votes on cases. From The Associated Press

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Celebrex sales OK'd

WASHINGTON — Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration concluded Friday that the popular painkiller Celebrex poses an increased risk for heart problems but should be allowed to remain on the market.

The FDA's arthritis and drug safety advisory committee, concluding three days of meetings to assess the risks of three popular painkillers called Cox-2 inhibitors, were to address Vioxx and Bextra later in the day.

The advisers also were set to frame recommendations to the FDA about whether further testing is needed for the drugs and any special warnings or limits that should be placed on them.

Boeing venture

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — A former top executive at Boeing Co. was sentenced to four months in prison Friday for illegally negotiating a \$250,000-a-year job for an Air Force procurement officer who was overseeing a potential multimillion-dollar contract for the company.

Michael Sears, 57, pleaded guilty in November to a single count of aiding and abetting illegal employment negotiations.

Sears, who was chief financial officer of the aerospace giant until he was fired in 2003, negotiated to hire Darleen Druyun at the same time Druyun held sway over a contract sought by Boeing that was worth billions of dollars.

L.A. wreck suspect

GLENDALE, Calif. — A man accused of killing 11 people by parking his truck in a train's path intended to get his estranged wife's attention by causing "a horrific tragedy," not to kill himself as originally thought, police said.

Authorities also said Juan Manuel Alvarez told them he had poured gasoline on the SUV before the Metrolink struck it Jan. 26 as it carried commuters to downtown Los Angeles.

Bush curbs lawsuits

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Friday signed a bill that he says will curtail multimillion-dollar class action lawsuits against companies and help end "the lawsuit culture in our country."

The legislation aims to discourage class action lawsuits by having federal judges take them away from state courts. It was a victory for conservatives who hope it will lead to other lawsuit limits and for businesses that have complained for decades that state judges and juries have been too generous to plaintiffs.

The president has described class action suits, in which a single person or a small group can represent the interests of thousands in court, as often frivolous.

From The Associated Press

Cosby won't face abuse charges

BY MARYCLAIRE DALE
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Authorities found sufficient evidence to support a woman's claims that Bill Cosby fondled her at his suburban mansion after giving her medication that made her dizzy, a prosecutor said.

Cosby will not face charges stemming from the allegation by a former employee of Temple University, Cosby's alma mater, Montgomery County District Attorney Bruce L. Castor Jr. said in a statement Thursday.

The woman, who now lives in her native Ontario, told Castor she was fondled last month, after a night out with friends in January 2004. Cosby gave her medication that made her woozy, then fondled her. She said she later awoke to find her bra undone and her clothes in disarray.

Cosby, 67, a former alumnus and booster, has denied the allegations. In a statement Thursday, his lawyer said Cosby was gratified by the decision.

"Mr. Cosby looks forward to moving on with his life," attorney Walter M. Phillips Jr. said.

Castor said that the accuser's yearlong delay in coming forward, and her contact with Cosby in the past year, weighed in the comedian's favor.

The prosecutor said he also reviewed claims by other people that Cosby had "behaved inappropriately" toward them, but that detectives could find no instance "where anyone complained to law enforcement of conduct which would constitute a criminal offense."

The woman's attorney, Dolores M. Troiani, called the evidence strong and said her client is likely to sue Cosby.



Cosby

"She felt, as we did, that it's a very strong case and that she was telling the truth and that Mr. Castor's opinion does not change the facts," Troiani said.

Troiani said her client gave prosecutors tapes of telephone calls between Cosby and the family that bolster the allegations.

The calls occurred after her client contacted police, the lawyer said.

Cosby's publicist, David Brokaw, declined comment Thursday on whether the comedian had any telephone contact with the family since the investigation began.

The long-married Cosby — best known as a warm, wisecracking TV dad — has provoked debate this past year with blunt remarks on personal responsibility aimed at the Black community. In 1997, the year his son Ennis was murdered, he acknowledged a brief affair with the mother of a young woman later convicted of extorting him.

It is the policy of The Associated Press not to publish names of alleged sexual assault victims without their consent.

The Hasty Pudding goes to ...

Actor Tim Robbins accepts troupe's Man of the Year award

BY NANCY RABINOWITZ
The Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Actor Tim Robbins pleaded, sang and faced off with protesters to earn the Hasty Pudding Man of the Year award.

Robbins, whose best-known roles include the wrongly convicted prisoner in "The Shawshank Redemption" and a quirky baseball pitcher in "Bull Durham," made his case Thursday to a "parole board" — a wooden board with "parole" written on it — and sang a version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" with the lyrics rewritten for him.

The actor, known for his social activism, also had to deal with sign-toting protesters before members of the Harvard-based student drama troupe, dressed in drag, presented him with the bronze pudding pot.

Robbins' companion, actress Susan Sarandon, was crowned the Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year in 1996.

"She actually prepared me for a parade, so she talked mostly about a parade and I didn't end up getting a parade," Robbins said of the advice he got from Sarandon. "Next time, maybe after tonight, we'll have an impromptu parade, open air cars, get some of the guys in drag."

Robbins, 46, earned a best supporting actor Oscar last year for "Mystic River."

Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones received the Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year award last week.

Hasty Pudding Theatricals, the nation's oldest undergraduate drama troupe, gives the awards to performers who have made a "lasting and impressive contribution to the world of entertainment."

Last year's recipients were Sandra Bullock and Robert Downey Jr.



Actor Tim Robbins, center, dressed in a wig and a prison-striped bra, is kissed by actors dressed in drag Nicholas Ma, left, and Joe Bress while being awarded Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals Man of the Year award in Cambridge, Mass., on Thursday.

Debate stirs shoe tossing at former DOD official

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Howard Dean, the newly minted leader of the Democratic Party, and former Pentagon adviser Richard Perle made clear their opposing views on the war in Iraq during a debate marred by a protester who tossed a shoe at Perle.

Perle had just started his comments Thursday when a protester threw a shoe at him before being dragged away, screaming, "Liar! Liar!"

Perle, a Pentagon official during the Reagan administration, was recently chairman of the Defense Policy Board. He was a major proponent of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, while Dean was among the war's most prominent opponents.

In his new role as chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Dean has stressed that Democrats are stronger than Republicans on defense.

"Defense is a lot broader than swaggering around saying you're going to kick Saddam's butt," Dean said Thursday.

Perle said the war in Iraq was justified based on the intelligence available at the time.

Dean also said the Bush administration has ignored the mounting threat in Iran and North Korea.

Perle had his own barbs, too. He began his opening comments in the 1½-hour debate by saying Democrats "looked at the Democratic Party and chose a physician to lead them."

Perle was forced by one of the questioners to recast a comment he made on Sept. 22, 2003, in which he predicted that within one year, there would be "a grand square in Baghdad named for President Bush."

But, Perle added, "I will be surprised yet again if we do not see a square in Baghdad named after this president."

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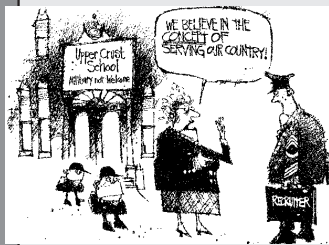
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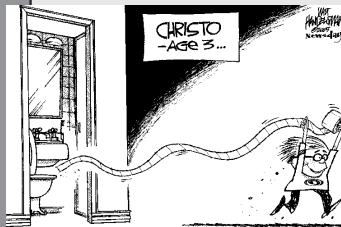
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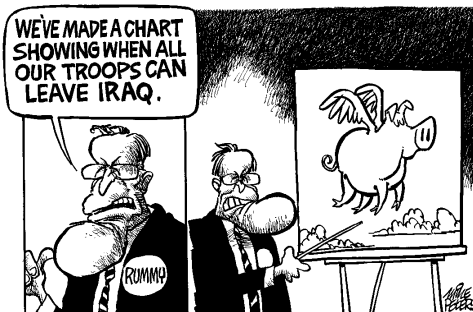
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Disturbing survey

CT KILLINGLY — A survey of teenagers in northeastern Connecticut has found an increasing number use household products to get high. The survey of 1,230 students in the 21-town region found 12 percent of ninth-graders and 15 percent of 10th-graders said they have used, at least once, aerosol sprays or other household products to get high.

Ethanol legislation

MT HELENA — The Senate passed legislation requiring that most gasoline sold in Montana be blended to contain 10 percent ethanol. The law would take effect a year after yet-to-be-built ethanol plants are capable of producing \$5 million gallons of the product, considered enough to meet Montana's yearly demand. The bill now goes to the House.

A faithful risk

OK GROVE — Usually, parishioners offer money to their churches. This time, the church handed out money.

Pastor Steve Dyer of the News-om Church gave \$14,000 to congregation members to invest for seven weeks, after which they are to bring the money and profits back to the church to be used in missionary work.

Dyer said the church isn't keeping track of who has the money.

He only gave one stipulation: It was not to be used to buy lottery tickets or to gamble.

Marijuana lawsuit

CA BERKELEY — Medical marijuana advocates filed a lawsuit Tuesday demanding California Highway Patrol officers stop confiscating pot from authorized users.

The lawsuit is the latest salvo in the long-running debate over medical marijuana in California, approved by voters in 1996, opposed by federal authorities ever since and applied unevenly all over the state.

The lawsuit against the highway patrol — which also names Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Bill Lockyer — says CHP's "rigid policy" of seizing medical marijuana "causes law-abiding citizens to suffer pain, humiliation, loss of dignity, extreme anxiety and a fear of the police."

The lawsuit seeks a court order stopping the CHP from seizing marijuana from legitimate patients.

Balloon creates sparks

IN MISHAWAKA — A Valentine's Day gift sure created some sparks here — when it plunged 2,100 homes and businesses into the dark.

The heart-shaped metallic Mylar balloon caused an electrical outage when it drifted into an electrical substation, said Phil Miller, the general manager of Mishawaka Utilities.

"It said 'I Love You' on it," he said. "It looks like someone didn't hold onto their Valentine's gift tightly enough."

The string caused a short circuit in a bank of capacitors, which are components that store electrical

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

charges within the city's power transmission network.

McLost and found

FL ORLANDO — Carol Birmingham almost had a heart attack when she realized her Mac Attack had cost \$8,700.

The 62-year-old British tourist didn't notice until Sunday morning that she had left her cash-stuffed purse on a McDonald's counter when she bought lunch the previous day.

Inside was her down payment for a vacation home.

But the panic was short-lived since an assistant manager at the restaurant turned the money over to the Orange County Sheriff's Office for safekeeping.

The Birmingham returned to McDonald's on Monday to give Barattin and fellow manager Aileen Norris an undisclosed reward.

'Squatters law' upheld

HI HONOLULU — A federal judge on Monday rejected a civil rights group's request to block the enforcement of a state law that allows authorities to ban people from public places after one warning.

U.S. District Judge Helen Gillmor scheduled a March 14 hearing to listen to the people allegedly

wronged by the law and establish whether the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii has a case.

Gillmor said she wanted to hear what the "actual impact" of the law has been since it was passed last May.

The law, known as Act 50 or the "squatters law," prohibits a person or group from entering a beach, park or other public place — including libraries or the state Capitol — for up to one year after receiving a warning or request to leave the premises.

Large alumni gift

NY ALFRED — Alfred University received a \$35 million donation from a 1954 graduate, President Charles Edmondson announced Monday.

The gift is the largest in the school's history.

Marlin Miller Jr. and his wife, Regina, gave \$10 million to expand the Miller Performing Arts Center, which opened in 1995.

The remainder of the money will go into the university's endowment to fund faculty positions, scholarships and visual and performing arts programs.

Political puppies

MN ST. PAUL — Attorney General Mike Hatch's office really went to the dogs.

Hatch brought his golden retriever, Bella, and her nine puppies to the office Tuesday at the request of his staff, which wanted to throw a "puppy shower." Laddie, the dogs' father, stayed home.

Leslie Sandberg, a spokeswoman for Hatch, said all the puppies have been purchased or spoken for. But it will be a few weeks before the mouth-old puppies head to their new homes.

Hatch said of the puppies, "They were born Republicans, but then they opened their eyes and now they're Democrats."

Phoenix-area light rail

AZ TEMPE — Nearly five years after Phoenix-area voters approved light rail, construction on the first line of Metro track began Tuesday.

Mayors from the three cities where the initial rail will run — Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa — joined dignitaries and the public for a ceremony to officially mark the start.

Utility work and construction of the train's maintenance and storage facility are under way. Now workers will start laying track for an initial 20-mile line, beginning with a 1-mile segment near the border of Tempe and Phoenix. Electric rail cars will start running on that test track by spring 2006.

The initial line is scheduled to open in December 2008.

Revenue shift blasted

KY FRANKFORT — Democratic senators from coal-producing counties blasted Republican Gov. Ernie Fletcher's budget plans to give the state's general fund some tax money usually marked for their counties. Now all coal mined in Kentucky is subject to a 5 percent tax which is split about evenly between the counties and the state. Fletcher wants Kentucky to get more than \$50 million of the money that the counties now receive.



Learning the tricks

Michael Harvey, 14, right, gives skateboarding lessons to his younger sister Candace, 12, in Farmington, N.M.



Beary nice

Don Lanco uses a chain saw to carve a statue of a bear behind Pollock Street Deli in New Bern, N.C.



Move 'em out

Members of a multigenerational Yampa Valley ranching family, from left, Becky, Perk and Ray Heid, gather horses on the family ranch, north of Steamboat Springs, Colo., after a storm.



Race of the beds Mississippi State University aerospace engineering students, left to right, Will Barksdale of Pascagoula, Vanessa Aubuchon of Ocean Springs, Jennifer Esper of LaPlace, La., and Rod Fleming of Rocky Mount, N.C., won the "Engineering Bedlam" event during National Engineers Week activities on the MSU campus.



Stuck in the office A white-tailed deer struggles to get back out of an office window at G.A. Braun Inc. in Syracuse, N.Y. The deer had crashed through the glass window into the office.



Brutttttt ... John Licari, Fort Atkinson, Wis., tries to stay warm as he waits in vain for a fish to bite before going in to warm up, while ice fishing at Brittingham Park in Monona Bay, Madison, Wis.



Picture perfect Peg Connery-Boyd paints a street scene using oil paints in Mystic, Conn.

Bugging suspected

RI PROVIDENCE — State police have launched an investigation at the Providence police headquarters after what's been described as a listening device was discovered over a covertly mounted under an employee's desk.

According to the union, a civilian employee who transcribes handwritten police reports into a computer noticed a tiny canister magnetically mounted beneath her desk. The woman gave it to police Lt. John Kaya, who unscrewed it and discovered a battery, circuits and what appeared to be a microphone. Kaya and two sergeants agreed that it appeared to be a bugging device, according to Sgt. Robert Pannicia, president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 3.

Union officials met with Cmdr. Paul Kennedy, and they agreed that the state police investigate. The Providence Journal reported.

Boy dies from gunshot

GA FOREST PARK — A 2-year-old boy was removed from life support Saturday, after being shot during a confrontation between his family and an intruder demanding money, authorities said.

It was not clear who fired the shot that struck Xavier Miranda. The boy had been declared brain dead, a hospital spokesman said.

Police said an intruder entered the family's apartment Thursday and grabbed Xavier while demanding \$1,000 in tax return money from the child's father.

The assailant started counting down while holding a gun pointed at the child's head. Before he could finish the countdown, the boy's aunt walked into the room.

Shots then were fired by both the suspect and the father, according to police.

Tax to pinch dairy farms

ME KNOX — After a couple of years of relatively stable prices, dairy farmers are facing their latest challenge: a tax on livestock semen, a product that is nothing less than critical to dairy operation.

Bull semen is as basic as feed to dairy operations, which breed cows about once every 14 months to keep them producing milk. Bulls aren't used much because they are hard to manage.

Farmers long avoided a tax many didn't even know existed as Genex Cooperative Inc., the largest livestock semen distributor in Maine, simply paid the 5 percent levy without passing it through to farmers, according to state Rep. John Nutting, D-Leeds. Then the company decided it would stop paying the tax and it started showing up on farmers' bills.

"That's why the issue has just hit the fan," said Nutting.

Pet lab turns into rat

TX GRAPEVINE — The owner of J.D. the Labrador may be wishing his dog weren't such a good retriever.

Matthew Porter of Richland Hills and two friends were playing Frisbee golf in a park when a police officer who thought he smelled burning marijuana began questioning them.

As the officer was checking for outstanding warrants, J.D. waded into a nearby creek and emerged

with a bag containing the drug. Porter, 25, was charged with possessing drug paraphernalia. Micah Hays, 24, was charged with marijuana possession. J.D. was turned over to the third person at the park, who faces no charges.

Prairie dogs blamed

MT INTERIOR — Jerry Heinrichs says that because of the long-running drought across the West, his cattle had to compete with prairie dogs for the grass. And the prairie dogs won.

Across his ranch and other swaths of both private and government-owned grassland in southwestern South Dakota, little remains but bare dirt, stones, prairie dog mounds and the burrowing rodents that live under them.

Heinrichs mostly blames the federal government, which for more than four years stopped poisoning prairie dogs while it decided whether they critters deserved to be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Ranchers say that the pests soon invaded their ranches and ate all the grass, devoured prickly pear cactus and dug down to get plant roots. Jonathan Proctor, a spokesman for the Predator Conservation Alliance, disputed the ranchers' account, saying the bare land was caused not by prairie dogs but by overgrazing during the drought.

Truck owner fined

VT BENNINGTON — Poorly maintained brakes, worn tires and speed may have contributed to a truck's collision with a school bus that sent six students to the hospital.

The state has fined the owner of the truck, Dallas & Mavis Specialized Carrier Co., of Wisconsin, \$500 for an inoperative brake, a brake component violation and poor tire depth, according to a state motor vehicles official.

The tires "were basically bald and some ... actually had wires exposed," said Lt. Paul Doucette of the Bennington Police.

An alarming ovation

VA RICHMOND — The Senate had been in session about half an hour and had begun Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer and several of his football players a rousing ovation when fire alarms sounded.

Senators, delegates, staff and about 100 Capitol visitors filed out and waited while the building was cleared.

"In the last 44 years, I don't recall coming out of a House session for a fire alarm or for any other reason," said Del. Lacey Putney.

No fire was found in the building.

Teen shot to death

NY NEW YORK — A 16-year-old Bronx boy is dead and another is under arrest for shooting him five times, killing him, police said.

Fernando Corea, a football team captain at Alfred E. Smith High School, was shot near his home, just days before his 17th birthday.

Police later arrested Quindel Francis, who lives in the nearby, and charged him with Corea's murder and criminal weapons possession. The shooting was said to be over a long-term feud between Corea's refusal to join the Bloods gang.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the live Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.med.navy.mil>

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005

AFN-FAMILY	AFN-VIDEO	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	NASAR-SPORTS	SPECTRUM	AFN-PACIFIC
9:00 Static Shock	8:56 Movie *** 'Soul Food' (1997) Vanessa Williams, Deshaun Brown and Jesse White	Danny Phantom	Access Hollywood	Nightline	NASCAR Racing Craftsman Truck Series - Florida Dodge Dealers 250 From Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla. (Taped)	Clean House	Access Hollywood
9:30 Winx Club (E)	9:00 Ytans 'AfterShock'	That So Jovan	Headline News	AFNews on Assignment		BBO With Bobby Flay	Headline News
10:00 Justice League	10:30 Cyberchase "N-Fair City" (E)	Switched	ESPNNews	Marshall With Chris Matthews		4th-4 Day	ESPNNews
10:30 The Fairly OddParents	11:00 Dragnet (E)	Focus on the Force	George Lopez 'Get Right'	The O'Reilly Factor		Jackson's Cakes Presents Hollywood Wives	Headline News
11:30 Justice League	11:30 Kids News (E)	America's Adventure	Half & Half	Dateline NBC	SportsCenter	101 Most Unforgettable SNL Moments	Movie Swap 'Strain/Ramens'
12:30 Cyberchase "N-Fair City" (E)	12:30 Riding Scope: Bay-Girl	WWE Raw	Law & Order 'Paradigm'	CRN Saturday Morning	Boxing Friday Night Fights	The Blues: Interpersonal tensions between gospel and the blues in 1955 Mississippi	Head & Order 'Paradigm'
13:00 Scooby's Saddle (E)	13:00 Planet's Funniest Animals	According to Jim	Headline News	Economy Watch		The Blues 'Godfather and Sons'	Headline News
14:00 Wild America	14:00 The Most Extreme Turtles	Wild Swap 'Baiters/Remains'	Saturday Night Live	CRN Saturday Morning		ESNews	Saturday Night Live
15:00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	15:00 Doug (E)	Law & Order 'Paradigm'	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends	Bulls and Bears	SportsCenter	Katrina and Friends - Real Beauty on Ice	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends
16:00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	16:00 Doug (E)	Headline News	The Entertainers	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
17:00 Doug (E)	17:00 The Wild Thornberrys	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
18:00 Doug (E)	18:00 The Fairly OddParents	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
19:00 Doug (E)	19:00 Rugs	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
20:00 Doug (E)	20:00 Movie *** 'The Color of Friendship' (2000, Drama) Carl Lumbly, Penny Johnson, Drew Barrymore, Bill Pullman	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
21:00 Doug (E)	21:00 Movie *** 'Titan A.E.' (2000) Voices of Matt Damon, Drew Barrymore, Bill Pullman	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
22:00 Doug (E)	22:00 American Idol	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
23:00 Doug (E)	23:00 American Idol	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
24:00 Doug (E)	24:00 American Idol	Headline News	Headline News	Forbes	College GameDay	To Be Announced	The Entertainers
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Alanis' dual citizenship

Canadian Alanis Morissette is now an American citizen.

The 30-year-old singer was among some 4,500 people who took the citizenship oath during a ceremony last week at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Morissette isn't turning her back on Canada—she's maintaining dual citizenship.

"I will never renounce my Canadian citizenship," Morissette said in a statement Wednesday. "I consider myself a Canadian-American."

Morissette's songs include "Ironic" and "You Oughta Know."

Ashley fights back

Ashley Olsen is suing The National Enquirer for \$40 million in damages over a story alleging that she was involved in a drug scandal, reports The Associated Press.

The lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Monday alleges libel and false light invasion of privacy by the tabloid.

The lawsuit said that while a story in The Enquirer's Feb. 21 issue doesn't refer to her using or selling drugs, it implied that Olsen, 18, was doing so with a misleading headline and cover picture depicting the actress with her eyes half-shut.

"Freedom of the press is a valuable right, but it is not a license for gossip tabloids to tar and feather innocent celebrities and destroy their reputations and businesses for the rags' profits," the lawsuit said.

No Europe tour for J.Lo

Days after performing a duet with husband Marc Anthony at the Grammy Awards show, Jennifer Lopez has canceled a European tour because of illness.

Lopez had been scheduled to attend the British charity premiere of her movie "Shall We Dance?" with costar Richard Gere on Wednesday. She called off the trip at the last minute, saying she was too ill to travel.

"I very much wanted to be in London today but unfortunately I'm not well," she said in a statement.

"At the advice of my doctors, I'm unable to travel... Please accept my sincerest apologies as I have to remain in Los Angeles."

The statement, which said the illness had caused Lopez "to cancel my European album tour," didn't specify what was wrong. J.Lo's new album, "Rebirth," is scheduled for release March 1.

Photos and stories from wire services



"Tonight Show" host Jay Leno talks with actress Annette Bening earlier this month. Bening has been nominated for an Oscar for "Being Julia."

Is the third time the charm for Annette Bening?

Nominee says these Oscars will be easy no matter what — she's not pregnant

By BARRY KOLTNOV

The Orange County Register

HIDDEN IN the winding canyon roads high above Los Angeles is a nondescript shopping center where the rich and famous shop for groceries, pick up Starbucks coffee and schmooze over bagels in a popular deli.

Although the area is a rural setting, the cars in the parking lot represent the spectrum of sophisticated luxury automobiles from Europe. Everybody is somebody in this neighborhood, and nobody is more somebody than Annette Bening.

All heads turn in her direction as the Oscar-nominated actress makes her way to a rear booth in a favorite breakfast spot. In less than a minute, an older couple who claim to be friends of Bening's husband, Warren Beatty, approach the booth and introduce themselves. A few minutes later, a fawning but opportunistic young woman pitches the actress on a book she wants to write about women who are "centered."

Ever polite, Bening accepts the woman's phone number, scrawled on a napkin, and promises to consider the proposal.

These are busy times for the 46-year-old actress, who has been nominated in the Best Actress category for her portrayal of a flamboyant British actress facing mid-life in the 1930s drama "Being Julia." It is her third Oscar nomination, the other two coming by way of "The Grifters" and "American Beauty."

Over a breakfast of scrambled egg whites, the tall, impossibly trim mother of four, dressed in a fashionable black pants suit, describes a typical day in this pre-Oscar period, the secret pact she once made with her fellow nominees and why she had to run out of the

Governor's Ball on one of the biggest nights of her husband's career.

Q: Please describe the morning of a glamorous Oscar-nominated movie star.

A: It started today at about 5:30 a.m. when my youngest daughter crawled into bed. That was sort of a wake-up call because I couldn't fall back asleep. So I fed the dog. Then I fed the kids, got them dressed and drove them to school.

Q: How glamorous. Didn't you do anything remotely related to movie stardom this morning?

A: I talked with some people about the dress.

Q: OK, now we're talking. What about the dress?

A: The dress is paramount in my life right now. All my girlfriends are voting on which dress I should wear to the Oscars. My husband has a vote. My kids have a vote. Is that the kind of glamour stuff you were looking for?

Q: Absolutely. I'm glad you're doing something frivolous along with raising a family and trying to have a life.

A: I really am trying to have a life.

Q: I know you are. With that in mind, how much time do you have to devote to things like the Oscars?

A: That's a good question. The whole awards stuff is fun, and it's wonderful to be recognized. It's very gratifying. But it's also very intangible. It always comes back to the work. I'm starting a new movie in March ("Running With Scissors") so that helps to keep me grounded. And, of course, the kids do that every day. Their needs are constant, and I'm grateful for that.

Q: This is your third nomination. How were your experiences at the Oscars ceremony the first two times?

A: The first time I had only done a couple of movies so it never occurred to me that I'd win. So I sat back and had a lot of fun.

But that experience was made even better when the five nominees in my category got together minutes before the show started and agreed that we'd meet for dinner the next week and whoever won would pay. Whoopi Goldberg won ("Ghost"). A few days later, I got a bouquet of flowers from Whoopi with a card that said to meet at a certain restaurant at a certain time. Everybody made it except Lorraine Bracco because she was working.

Q: So you really didn't think you would win?

A: There was no hype about me so I didn't think about it. That is, until the very last second when they called my name as one of the nominees, and I thought: "They could actually call my name."

Q: The second Oscar night was the famous pregnancy scare, wasn't it?

A: There was never any real danger of me delivering that night. I was still a couple of weeks away from my due date. But the experience of being pregnant is so all-consuming that no matter what's going on, that's all you can think about. But "American Beauty" was getting a lot of awards, my husband got a very prestigious award that night and it was starting to get a bit overwhelming. Finally, at the Governor's Ball, with 50 cameras in my face and the baby moving around constantly from the adrenaline flowing in my system, I couldn't take it anymore. I didn't feel well, so as discreetly as I could, I walked out. Warren ran after me and we went home, where I could just be a pregnant lady and not a movie star.

A: Will you enjoy it more this time?

Q: I think it will be a lot easier not being pregnant.

Q: Do you think you might win?

A: I just don't know.

Horoscope

Your role in the world influences what you see in the mirror and vice versa. Though the Cancer moon brings awareness to the small solar system of our lives—the home environment and five most important loved ones who orbit our hearts—Mercury and Uranus agree to bring a glimpse of what we might do to enlarge our sphere of power.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(February 19). You're an inspiration to those you meet this year. You come through for someone big time next month, and as a result, that person holds you in high esteem and shares his or her best with you. A graduation of some kind is featured in May, and you're on your way. Financial spikes come in April and August.

September brings the exotic to your door. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 5, 22, 40 and 2.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). A minor interference could hang you up big time if not dealt with squarely. So think ahead, and act quickly to clear problems while they are small. Let friends know how you'd like to be treated.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Stick with that decision you made long ago because it's noble to do so. Take a deep breath, and try to consider everyone's feelings. Spots are a lucky outlet bringing up your endorphin level and popularity level, too.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your life mission steers you through important choices. If you don't have a mission statement, make one up. Someone asks for a loan, but what this person really needs is emotional support.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Change is healthy, but you'd never know it the way you're fighting tooth and nail to keep things as they are! Let go. You're safe now—you really are! A new environment offers artistic inspiration.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Clarify goals before friends and authority

figures set you off on a tangent. Plan a trip without worrying about how you will fund it. Once your plan is in place, you attract the required funds.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your charisma reaches far and wide.

You'll be surprised at who responds to your charm now. Distant family matters may require attention. Singles could find themselves attracted to an older romantic prospect.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you're using your creativity, your achievements will be satisfying on many levels. Expect romance to be an ebb and flow. Do something that will meet both physical and spiritual needs—like yoga or Tai Chi.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Remember that you're not the only sensitive one. Eggshell walking has its time and place—this is it.

When you are tired of battling the difficult moments of the daily grind, a kindly air sign helps out.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). People from the past will cross your mind, for no apparent reason. It's lucky to get in touch with one of these folks, especially if things ended badly. Focus on positive memories, and hope for the happiness of others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Adventure awaits. Maybe you will find it just around the corner at your local mini-mart, or maybe it will take the form of an unexpected trip. You can go kicking and screaming or just go—the choice is always yours!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Worries are blown out of proportion if you allow it. But if you concentrate on what is working well, you'll be able to re-create success again and again. The timing is perfect tonight for a romantic gesture.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your healing gift is emphasized. You can bring comfort to anyone who needs it by just being there. Reading keeps you in touch with the world at large. Someone younger has new words for you; listen up.

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Holiday Mathis



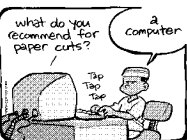
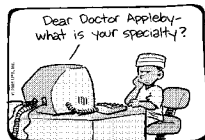
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Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



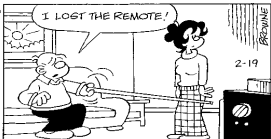
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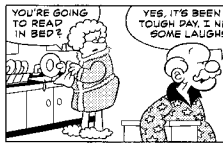
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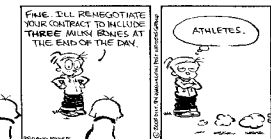
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey

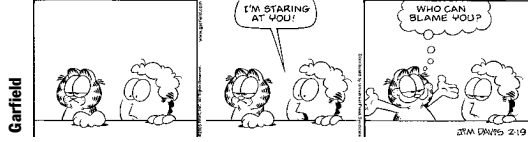
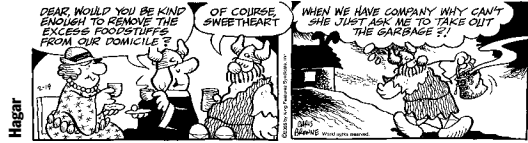


Red Rover

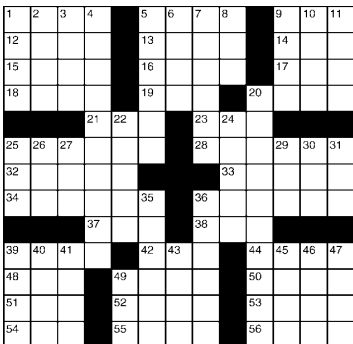


Better or Worse





Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Bunch of hoodlums | 54 Dawn goddess | 25 Moo goo gai pan pan |
| 5 Soft drink | 55 Out of play | 26 "— Believer" |
| 6 Soft drink | 56 Egg container | |

Down

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 "Holy cow!" | 29 Jessor |
| 2 Vicinity | 30 Guevara |
| 3 In the vicinity | 31 Branch |
| 4 "Laugh-In" alumna | 31 Calendar abbr |
| 5 Entrances | 35 Tahini |
| 6 "That hurts!" | ingredient |
| 7 Release | 36 Ranch |
| 8 Nincompoop | 39 Nephrite |
| 9 Ponce de — | 40 Toast topper |
| 10 Malaria symptom | 41 Chops |
| 11 Speck | 43 Cookbook author |
| 20 Acting daughter of 4-Down | Rombauer |
| 22 Jackson Hole's river | 45 Carnival attraction |
| | 46 Puts into the mix |
| | 47 Bridge position |
| | 49 Gort, worker |

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-19 CRYPTOUIP

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OKZ GXNNQG KF K DLFNX,
E I Y X C DN RN OKW T Z P

IL A PALLO KZC RLKAC?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FLICK THAT
 FEATURES RICH PEOPLE AND MACRAE
 ARTISTS: "THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-KNOTS."
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals M

Potential wife seeking a free ride

Dear Abby: I'm going with a girl from Denver who tells me that when a couple travels together on trips, cruises, etc., they share the expenses. But when they get engaged, the fellow should pay all expenses on all trips, etc. Is this what they do in Denver, or will I be taken advantage of?

— Needs To Know in California

Dear Needs To Know: The attitude you describe is not specific to one geographical area. You are being put on notice that the moment you put a ring on this young woman's finger, you will be expected to support her financially. If that's your definition of being taken advantage of, find a girl from a lower altitude with less lofty expectations.

Dear Abby: I hope you'll print this. Many women will face what happened to me. They

Dear Abby



should be prepared. After 36 years of marriage, I finally confronted my husband about his cheating. I had remained silent for decades, hoping he'd change as he grew older. His response? He left me and filed for divorce. He said I had been a good wife, but he wanted to start a new life.

Thank the Lord that before I confronted him, I had begun to get my affairs in order. I had been saving from my household allowance (I was a stay-at-home mother of four), knowing I'd need money to defend myself should he ever leave me. I gathered all the information I could about our finances and photographed all of our possessions. Had I acted differently, I would have lost my share of our assets, as he tried to hide them.

I also got my GED certificate, took nurse's training and began looking for a job. I had already established credit in my own

name, using my husband's salary because I had none. I did not confront my husband until I was prepared to take care of myself. Aware that my children still loved their father, even if they no longer respected him, I didn't try to destroy him. I remained a lady through it all, so that if he came to his senses and realized our marriage was worth saving, I'd have no regrets about my actions.

While I wouldn't wish what I went through on my worst enemy, I'm glad I handled it the way I did. It took more than five years for me to recover. My life will never be the same. I lost my husband, my church, my last child left home, and I went through menopause — all in one year. But if I can survive, anyone can.

— Standing Tall in Texas
Dear Standing Tall: I wish you success and happiness in your new life.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69404, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

STRYT

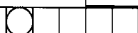


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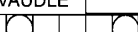
KRYJE



BERICK



VAUDLE



Print answer here:



(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: MUSTY SNOWDY ABACUS BEAUTY
Answer: He destroyed the piece of sculpture because the — BUST WAS A BUST

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Teacher's pet now in the doghouse

Dear Annie: People often say that one should never get involved in an office romance, but it's too late for me. I am a 23-year-old woman who got involved with my much-older boss, a professor whom I was assisting while working on my graduate degree.

In an academic setting this is frowned upon, so we kept it secret for over a year.

The problem, however, is that it was incredibly difficult for me when the relationship came to an end. I stopped working for this man, but now find myself adrift both emotionally and professionally in the department. And I never anticipated the professional retribution from him and from my peers.

I have lost more than I can describe. No one ever talks about student-teacher relationships, but they happen all the time. I can handle the heart-

Annie's Mailbox



ache, but how do I handle the professional fallout?

— Former Teacher's Pet
Dear Former Pet: While we cannot condone your behavior, the truth is, your professor is the one at fault. He abused his authority by taking advantage of his position over you, and he should have known better than to get involved with a student.

Inform this professor that he will immediately stop penalizing you for the affair or you will report him to the head of the department or the dean of the school. You made a mistake, and now you must deal with the consequences. So should he.

Dear Annie: I'd like to reply to "Hopeless Epileptic," who had a seizure while on a date. I have a suggestion.

In addition to seeing-eye dogs and hearing-ear dogs, these

dogs have been specially trained dogs to alert epileptics before a seizure so that they can get to safety before the onset. The advantage of having such a dog is twofold. First, he has a companion to help him. Second, a dog is a great conversation starter and a good way to meet people.

I live north of Purdy, Wash., where the Purdy Women's Prison is located. These women began training seeing-eye dogs, and the project grew. The inmates now train dogs for other special needs as well. They have an excellent reputation. This idea might be worth looking into for that gentleman.

— Port Orchard, Wash.
Dear Port Orchard: Thank you for your wonderful suggestion.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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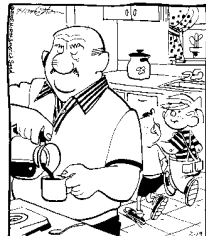
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"Daddy said we'll have some good old-fashioned music in our church if they can find an organ donor."

GRAFFITI



Dennis the Menace



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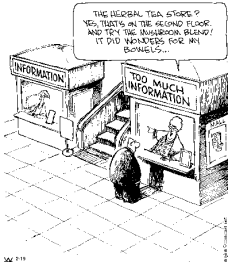
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The Far Side

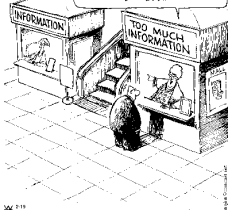


The third most common cause of forest fires.

Non Sequitur



"THE IDEAL TEA, THERE? YES, TEA IN THE SECOND FLOOR, AND TEA IN THE HALLWAY BLEND! IT'D WONDERFUL FOR MY BUNNELS..."



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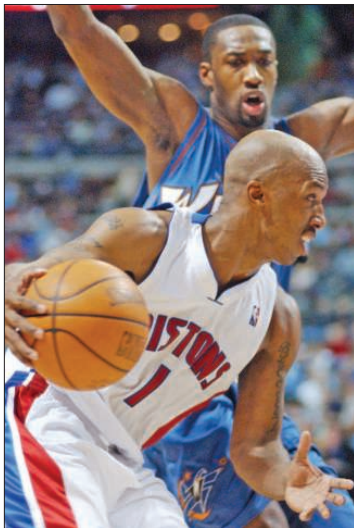
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Detroit guard Chauncey Billups (1) drives against Washington guard Gilbert Arenas during a game on Feb. 12. The Pistons' recent surge can be attributed by a return to the team's trademark tough defense and unselfish offensive play. The team was also affected early by a lack of motivation and fallout from the brawl against Indiana in November.

Playing like champs again

Since Christmas, Pistons have won 20 of 27 games

BY LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

DETROIT — The Detroit Pistons are suddenly playing like defending NBA champions — it just took almost half the season.

After sputtering early, Detroit has won nine of 10 games — the past four by at least 20 points — with tough defense and unselfish play on offense.

"We've played about as well as we can possibly play," Pistons coach Larry Brown said.

The Pistons (32-19) head into the All-Star break leading the Central Division, with Cleveland close behind, and they're a half-game ahead of their pace from a year ago.

"I love the way we're playing right now," Joe Dumars, president of basketball operations, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I would really like to see us sustain this type of play."

The Pistons seemed to lack motivation against lowly opponents and were slowed by injuries at the start of the season. Then they were distracted by the melee at The Palace in November and Brown's delayed response to rumors he would leave in the offseason to coach the New York Knicks.

Detroit routinely was playing from behind in the second half of games against teams wanting to measure themselves against the champion.

Ben Wallace — the team's lone

All-Star for the third straight season — had an emergency appendectomy in August, and free-agent acquisition Antonio McDyess wasn't 100 percent healthy early in the season.

Brown also was out early after undergoing hip surgery.

Wallace was suspended for six games for his role in the brawl on Nov. 19, and the team struggled without him — especially because it incessantly was asked about a topic it didn't want to discuss.

The Pistons fell to .500 on Dec. 22 after losses to the expansion Charlotte Bobcats and Atlanta, which has the NBA's worst record.

"Early in the season, we were playing down to the level of our opponents, but we've gotten a lot better about that," Chauncey Billups said. "The way we are playing now, it doesn't matter who we are playing."

Since raising eyebrows with a 12-12 record, the Pistons have won 20 of 27 games.

Just when things seemed to settle down — during their recent roll — Brown's name was linked to his hometown team, the Knicks, and he was slow to end the conversation.

Brown since has insisted Detroit will be his last professional stop, and the focus is back on the court — where the Pistons are rolling.

Detroit won its past four games by an average of 22.3 points, and its previous five victories were by an average of 16.6 points.

"They are playing like champs again," said Milwaukee's coach Terry Porter, who faced Detroit in the first round of last season's playoffs. "The guards are playing well, and that defense can cause a lot of problems for everyone. Ben's doing his thing, and Rasheed [Wallace] is really playing well."

Despite a sluggish start, the Pistons weren't concerned because they returned all of their starters from last season and made some sound moves in the offseason for their short- and long-term future.

They replaced Mehmet Okur with McDyess for much less money, and the former All-Star and Olympian has averaged 9.9 points and 6.4 rebounds in 48 games, the most he's played in four years.

Corliss Williamson was traded to Philadelphia to clear salary-cap space to help Detroit re-sign Ben Wallace and Tayshaun Prince. Rookie Carlos Delfino was expected to pick up some of the playing time Williamson left behind, but he's been limited by an injured knee. Delfino hopes to practice next week.

Detroit didn't bring back reserve guard Mike James, but later replaced him by acquiring Carlos Arroyo from Utah for Elden Campbell.

"They look like they are almost where we were last year in the playoffs," James said. "And don't forget, they are the champs until someone beats them."

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'Unselfish' T-wolves hand Cavaliers a loss

Szczerbiak leads hosts' 55-6 edge in bench scoring

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — For someone who wanted nothing to do with the coaching profession, Kevin McHale sure seems to be suited for it.

Wally Szczerbiak came off the bench to score 26 points, and Kevin Garnett added 20 points, 18 rebounds and six assists to lead the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 94-88 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Thursday night.

"Kevin's got us playing beautiful basketball, unselfish basketball," Garnett said. "He's like a breath of fresh air."

Since McHale took over for his old college buddy Flip Saunders, the Timberwolves have shown a spark and enthusiasm that had been sorely lacking during their monotonously disappointing start to the season.

"We have to work the opponent every game," said McHale, who is 2-1 since taking over for Saunders on Sunday. "That doesn't mean points, that doesn't mean rebounds, that doesn't mean assists. It means digging in and beating somebody to a rebound."

After sleepwalking through the first half of the season, the Timberwolves have embraced McHale's credo.

"We're playing a lot different," Cavaliers guard Jeff McInnis said. "They are taking on McHale's personality and playing a lot harder."

The Cavaliers were looking for their 31st victory before the All-Star break after winning just 35 games last season. Were it not for LeBron James' illness, they just might have pulled it off.

James had 26 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, but was helped to the locker room early in the fourth quarter while battling exhaustion from being ill. After getting fluids in the locker room, James returned to the court with just four minutes left to play and had to turn to his knees in the huddle during a timeout.

James didn't address the media after the game. A team spokesman said that he was being treated for the flu.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 24 points, nine rebounds and two blocks, but the output from Cleveland's two All-Stars wasn't enough to offset Minnesota's 55-6 advantage in bench scoring.

Szczerbiak led the reserves, with Fred Hoiberg adding 13 points and Eddie Griffin chipping in nine points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

"Our bench killed them," Szczerbiak said. "We've got the ability to do that. We've got a really potent second unit. We can come in with some players that are really being aggressive and looking to score." That can keep teams on their heels and take the wind out of their sails.

That was certainly the case with Cleveland. When James went to the bench to catch a breather, the Cavs seemed lost, unable to find the scoring punch needed to keep up with the well-balanced Wolves.

McInnis did his best to fill in, hitting two big jumpers off drives to the basket that gave Cleveland an 81-79 lead with 4:30 to play.

The Timberwolves responded with an 11-2 run. Garnett hit a layup and jumper, Szczerbiak and jumper, and McInnis was able to elude in for an offensive rebound off a missed free throw from Eddie Griffin that led to a 90-83 advantage with 1:27 to play.

James scored six more points after returning to the court, but Griffin sealed the win when he took a no-look pass from Garnett and made a reverse layup with 23 seconds to go.

McInnis had 17 points and seven assists, and Drew Gooden added 12 points and 10 rebounds for Cleveland.

"It was frustrating," Ilgauskas said. "At some point, we have to figure this out. Really good teams that go deep in the playoffs win games like that and we haven't."

Mavericks 119, Suns 113: At Phoenix, Michael Finley matched his season high with 33 points and John Howard had a career-high 30 to help undermanned Dallas erase a 10-point halftime deficit.



Minnesota's Wally Szczerbiak (10) passes between Cleveland defenders Zydrunas Ilgauskas, right, and Robert Taylor, left, during the Timberwolves' 94-88 victory Thursday. Szczerbiak had a team-high 26 points as the Timberwolves improved to 2-1 under coach Kevin McHale.

The loss dropped the Suns to 41-13 and denied them an opportunity to finish with NBA's best record before the All-Star break. That honor goes to the San Antonio Spurs (41-12).

Dallas (35-16) completed a perfect four-game trip, beating Phoenix, Sacramento, Seattle and Golden State.

"We went into four hostile environments and got four big wins," Finley said.

Finley, recently challenged by coach Don Nelson to increase his production, scored 25 points in the second half. In the fourth quarter, he connected on three three-pointers and scored 13 points.

"More than offense, we wanted consistent leadership from him, more rebounding and tougher defense," assistant coach Avery Johnson said of Finley. "Some times, you need a heart-to-heart with the coach."

The Suns concentrated on stopping Dirk Nowitzki, the league's third-leading scorer with a 27.1 average, and held him to 16 points. He also had 16 rebounds.

"They put off Nowitzki all the time and that opened the floor for everyone else," Howard said.

Amare Stoudemire led the Suns with 31 points and 12 rebounds. Quentin Richardson had 22, and Steve Nash added 19 points and 11 assists — the 11th consecutive game he had at least that many assists.

The Mavericks played without three key players — center Erick Dampier (strained tendon in right foot), swingman Jerry Stackhouse (strained right groin) and point guard Marquis Daniels (appendicitis).

"I felt there was more pressure but also more freedom to be myself and play my game," Lewis said. "At the same time, I knew I'd have to produce more and that the team had confidence in me to be one of the main guys."

After star Gary Payton was traded in February 2003, McMillan called more plays down the stretch for Lewis. The youngster's confidence grew, and he formed a comfortable fit with Ray Allen, acquired in the Payton deal.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	21	1	95.2	0
Philadelphia	26	27	49.1	1
New Jersey	21	32	39.6	6
New York	21	32	39.6	6
Toronto	22	32	39.6	6

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	40	14	74.1	0
Washington	39	22	57.7	9
Orlando	28	34	45.3	11
Charlotte	19	39	32.9	17
Atlanta	10	41	19.6	20 1/2

Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	32	19	62.7	0
Cleveland	29	21	58.8	7
Chicago	26	23	53.1	9
Indiana	25	26	49.0	7
Milwaukee	20	30	40.0	11 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	42	12	77.4	0
Dallas	35	16	68.5	8
Houston	32	16	66.9	5
Memphis	31	17	64.6	6
New Orleans	41	12	208	30

Northwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	39	19	67.3	10
Minnesota	27	27	50.0	10
Denver	24	29	45.3	12 1/2
Utah	23	29	44.3	13
Pacific Division	W	L	Pct	GB

Phoenix	41	13	75.9	0
Sacramento	39	19	67.3	7 1/2
L.A. Lakers	26	24	52.0	15
L.A. Clippers	25	25	50.0	17 1/2
Golden State	15	38	28.3	25 1/2

All-Star Game — Cleveland 93, Dallas 115, Phoenix 118

Fridays games

Saturday's games

Sunday's games

All-Star Game at Denver

Thursday

T-wolves 94, Cavaliers 88

CLEVELAND — James 10-19 5-6 26, Gooden 5-17 3-12, Ilgauskas 11-20 2-8 24, Payton 14-13 2-3, McInnis 7-13 1-7, Harris 0-4-0-0, Bradley 1-10-2, Brown 5-2-2, 4, Dampier 0-0-0-0, 0, Totals 35-53-18-88

MINNESOTA — Szczerbiak 3-4 1-2 7, Garnett 9-19 2-10, Johnson 2-0-4, Nash 2-0-4, Howard 2-0-4, Gooden 10-20 2-8 24, Payton 14-13 2-3, McInnis 7-13 1-7, Harris 0-4-0-0, 0, Totals 35-53-18-88

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After draft-day nightmare, Lewis living a dream

By TIM KORTE

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Back in 1998, Rashard Lewis was projected as an NBA lottery pick coming out of the University of South Carolina. He was the high schooler, plucked to the second round, plummeting into tears as he waited near the stage on draft night.

"Probably one of the worst days of my entire life," Lewis said. "It felt like my dream was being shattered right before my eyes."

Well, toss the hankie and check

out the Seattle SuperSonics forward, now. Lewis is headed to his first All-Star game after averaging 20.4 points, a career-best, and 5.5 rebounds a game.

"It's something I've been trying to do since I've been in the league," Lewis said. "I guess I just had to wait my turn."

After seven years, the 25-year-old native of Denver after for Lewis to fulfill his potential, setting the All-Star Game as a goal. In the summer of 2002, he signed a seven-year contract worth up to

\$75 million with incentives. The coaches, who select reserves, felt Lewis deserved to go.

"He's worked hard. He has improved," Seattle coach Nate McMillan said. "I've seen the growth, the improvement, the maturity. He's understanding the game better. I think he's earned the right to be on the All-Star team."

Sonics officials waited patiently for Lewis to fulfill his potential, setting the All-Star Game as a goal. In the summer of 2002, he signed a seven-year contract worth up to

\$75 million with incentives.

"I felt there was more pressure but also more freedom to be myself and play my game," Lewis said. "At the same time, I knew I'd have to produce more and that the team had confidence in me to be one of the main guys."

After star Gary Payton was traded in February 2003, McMillan called more plays down the stretch for Lewis. The youngster's confidence grew, and he formed a comfortable fit with Ray Allen, acquired in the Payton deal.

Rookie Challenge rosters

To be played Friday, Feb. 18 (9-11 p.m. ET/PT)

Rookie Team
Tony Allen, Chicago
Lionel Curry, Chicago
Ben Gordon, Dallas
Dwight Howard, Orlando
Andre Iguodala, Philadelphia
LeBron James, Cleveland
Ericka Klayton, C. Charlotte
Quentin Richardson, Seattle

Sophomore Team
Carmelo Anthony, Denver
Chris Andersen, Miami
Antonio Davis, Miami
Jonny Haskin, Miami
LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas
LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas
LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas

Sophomore Team
Carmelo Anthony, Denver
Chris Andersen, Miami
Antonio Davis, Miami
Jonny Haskin, Miami
LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas
LeBron James, Cleveland
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Chris Andersen, Miami
Antonio Davis, Miami
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LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas
LeBron James, Cleveland
Josh Howard, Dallas

Same ol' Bonds expected in S.F.

Red Sox-Yankees sniping returns as baseball opens spring training

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — San Francisco Giants manager Felipe Alou understands there will be even more attention on his team this spring because of the steroid suspicion surrounding Barry Bonds.

"If you're good, you're good — whether it is the era of the ste-



roids, or the cigars, or the hot dog, or the beer, or the amphetamine, or the red juice, or the whiskey," Alou said as his team reported Thursday in Scottsdale, Ariz. "He's been through the death of Bobby, his dad, along with the steroid stuff. I expect for him to just show up and swing the bat and hit."

In Mesa, Ariz., Chicago Cubs manager Dusty Baker said he reached out to Sammy Sosa after the outfielder was traded to Baltimore, seeking to understand why their relationship came apart at the end of last season.

"I got hold of him and we had a short conversation. I wished him well. I did ask him, I said, 'Hey, man, I'm still bewildered about what happened and why,' and he didn't really have an answer," Baker said Thursday before Chicago's first workout of the spring.

"He said, 'It's in the past, good luck and God bless you.' And that was the extent of the conversation," he said.

■ Curt Schilling arrived at the Boston Red Sox camp in Fort Myers, Fla., on Thursday, saying he hopes to recover from ankle surgery in time to pitch Boston's

April 3 opener at New York's Yankee Stadium, possibly against former Arizona teammate Randy Johnson.

After Schilling and Pedro Martinez helped lead Boston to its first title in 86 years, Martinez left to sign with the New York Mets. Schilling said he enjoyed pitching with Pedro a lot more than Martinez liked pitching alongside him.

"I think that was pretty obvious at the end, not while it was happening. But I guess when you look at what he said afterwards, it was obvious that it wasn't as fun of a thing for him as it was for me," Schilling said. "When the playoffs came and he made the comment about somebody having to have a lot of guts to come up and tell him he wasn't going to pitch Game 1, the kind of told me where we were at."

■ New Boston teammate David Wells, who helped New York win two AL pennants and one World Series, got right into the swing of the Red Sox-Yankees sniping, saying Alex Rodriguez "has to earn it" and admitting he didn't get along with Yankees manager Joe Torre.

"I remember reading the press conference or something when he went there," Wells said of A-Rod. "He said: 'When we' He said a 'we' in his comment about like he's won like three or four rings with them and he hadn't, and that kind of disturbed me."

"He shouldn't put himself in that category," Wells added. "You've got to earn it. It's like he's been there the whole time. But you can't take away what A-Rod has done for the game. He's a great player, and he will continue to be a great player."

Wells remembered difficult times with Torre and pitching coach Mel Stottlemyre.



Washington Nationals pitcher Joe Morgan fields a ground ball during a drill on the first day of spring training for the former Montreal Expos.

"I've never had a good relationship with Joe," he said. "We've had a few run-ins and Mel Stottlemyre as well, and Mel's probably the best pitching coach I probably ever had. But just when you have run-ins like that, it just leaves a sour taste, and who needs it?"

■ At the Yankees' camp, Randy Johnson playfully got into it, too. The Big Unit said he didn't think that merely by signing with the Yankees he'd join A-Rod as a target of the Red Sox and their fans.

"I haven't done anything to them," he said.

Not yet, but his job is to lead the Yankees to their first title since 2000 and deny the Red Sox a second straight World Series title. "So they'll be mad at me if I pitch well against them? Bring it on then," he said, laughing.

■ In Viera, Fla., the new Washington Nationals held their first workout for pitchers and catchers following the team's move from Montreal. Players more or less used to performing in a vacuum are having every throw filmed by seven television cameras.

"It was a little strange during stretch seeing everybody out there," reliever Joey Eischen

said. "Being an Expo, being here a long time, I've never seen that. I've been in 11 of other camps. I've been with 11 other pro teams. It would equate a little bit with the Yankees."

■ In Peoria, Ariz., new Seattle Mariners manager Mike Hargrove didn't like his cap as he watched his team work out for the first time.

"The hat's killing me," he said with a laugh. "The person who designed these hats should be drawn and quartered, but the Seattle colors are nice. That part, I like."

■ In Lakeland, Fla., new Detroit Tigers closer Troy Percival was the first player to report, at 6:30 a.m. The Tigers also learned that reliever Ugueth Urbina would not be in camp until at least early next week. Urbina's mother disappeared Sept. 1 from her home in Urbina's native Caracas, Venezuela. A senior Venezuelan senior police official has confirmed news reports that the amount of ransom demanded was about \$3 million.

Urbina left the Tigers last September for Venezuela following his mother's disappearance. He has declined to comment on the case.

Woods' 67 leaves him two back in Nissan

By DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Tiger Woods tossed his putter some 40 feet toward his bag after going from the right fringe to the left fringe and making bogey. He took an angry swing after missing a short birdie putt. And he ended his round watching two putts burn the edge of the cup.

He still managed a 4-under-67, leaving him two shots behind Brian Davis of England after the first round of the Nissan Open. Despite his career struggles at Riviera, Woods had a hard time finding the bright spot on what turned out to be a rainy day.

"I putted like a fool today," Woods said. "It was an absolutely horrific day on the greens. But I'm hitting it great. If I would have just putted normal today, I probably would have shot an 8-under with not too much effort."

Davis made it around without too much effort.

The 26-year-old Englishman began with a 4-iron into a 5-foot for eagle on the par-5 first, finished with eight pars and signed for a 65 to take a one-shot lead over Luke Donald, Darren Clarke and Retief Goosen.

"I've played a lot of links golf, and if you drop a shot, you start fighting it," Davis said.

He mentioned lining golf on a couple of occasions. The wind was into his face along a stretch of holes on the front, then turned downwind, blowing his face on some of the closing holes — just like it does on some links courses in Britain when the tide changes.

The Nissan Open had a British feel in other areas — particularly the leader board.

Donald, another young Englishman, made three straight birdies on his back nine — twice with 30-foot putts — and was tied for the lead until his tee shot on No. 9 landed in a divot near the bunker, and he placed his approach into a bunker to close with a bogey.

Clarke is from Northern Ireland, and he got off to another strong start with one of several highlights in the first round at Riviera. On the par-3 sixth, famous for a bunker situated in the middle of the green, Clarke's 7-iron landed to the skirt of the fringe surrounding the bunker, then spun back into the cup for an ace.

"A little bit of a skill and a lot of luck," Clarke said. "That came at the right time."

Quigley had one of only seven birdies on the fabled 18th hole, from nearly 50 feet just off the green, to join the group chasing Davis on what figures to be a wet weekend.

Adam Scott, Jose Coorees, Kevin Sutherland and two-time defending champion Mike Weir joined Woods at 67. The group at 68 included two-time Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal and Steve Elkington, who won the 1995 PGA Championship at Riviera in a playoff.

Greenwell feels Canseco cheated him out of MVP

The Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Mike Greenwell was runner-up in the American League MVP voting in 1988 and wants everyone to know why that happened: Jose Canseco, who won the award, cheated.

In his book released this week, Canseco discussed his steroid use and accused other players of using the illegal substance. His tainted success, Greenwell said Thursday, deprived other players of recognition and honors.

Greenwell spent his entire career as a Red Sox outfielder from 1985 through 1996 and hit .303. He was a teammate of Canseco for his last two seasons.

"I would have never said a word, but now that Jose's admit-



ted he was using steroids during the time he beat me (for) the MVP, then I have a problem with that because, obviously, I wasn't playing on an even playing field," Greenwell said.

"He reaped a lot of rewards and a lot of benefits for being on an illegal drug and probably took something away from me that I never got to feel. So does it bother me? Absolutely."

Orlones sign Parrish

BALTIMORE — Left-hander John Parrish and the Baltimore Orioles agreed Thursday to a \$615,000, one-year contract.

Parrish was asked for a raise from \$320,000 to \$285,000, and the Orioles had offered \$575,000. An arbitration hearing was scheduled for Friday in Tampa, Fla.

Parrish was 6-3 with a 3.46 ERA in a career-high 56 games last year.

Nationals get broadcaster

WASHINGTON — Bonneville International Corp., which operates four stations in the Washington, D.C. market, pulled out a last-minute victory Thursday in the battle for broadcast rights to Washington Nationals games.

Financial terms of the one-year deal were not disclosed. The Nationals will hire and pay the play-by-play broadcast team, said Joe Oxley, Bonneville's senior vice president, said.

Bonneville prevailed over Infinity Broadcasting, which carries Washington Redskins games, and Clear Channel, which broadcasts Washington Wizards games.

Mendoza rejoins Yankees

TAMPA, Fla. — Ramiro Mendoza returned to the New York Yankees on Thursday, agreeing to a minor league contract.

Mendoza, not expected to pitch until May following shoulder surgery, would get an \$850,000, one-year contract and have the chance to make \$95,000 in performance bonuses starting at 25 appearances.

Mendoza went 2-1 with a 3.52 ERA in 27 games last year with Boston after 10 years with the Yankees.

Chargers slap tag on Brees

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — For a guy who wasn't expected to do much last season, Drew Brees sure got a nice raise.

The San Diego Chargers used their franchise tag Thursday on Brees and will offer him a one-year contract just more than \$8 million. The quarterback made \$1.56 million in base pay last season, and led the Chargers out of the NFL's basement to the AFC West title with a 12-4 record.

The Chargers needed to put the tag on the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year to keep him from leaving as an unrestricted free agent.

"Franchising him is a no-brainer because if we didn't, we wouldn't get any compensation and he wouldn't be here, he'd be going to the airport," General Manager A.J. Smith said. "We want him to be our quarterback. I mean, a little bit over \$8 million for one year, for a quarterback, I think, tells you clearly what we think of his abilities."

Brees rebounded from a nightmare 2003 season to lead the



Drew Brees, who made \$1.56 million last season and will earn just over \$8 million next season, was tagged as a non-exclusive franchise player, meaning he can negotiate with other teams.

Chargers to their first playoff berth in nine seasons. He also was voted to the Pro Bowl.

Brees has said he wants a long-term deal from the Chargers, but Smith said the team currently is not interested in offering one.

Brees, on vacation in Australia with his wife, said in a statement issued by the team that he was happy to remain in San Diego.

"We've built a solid foundation and I feel we can really make a run. I'm excited about being a part of that," Brees said.

His salary for 2005 is the average of the top five salaried quarterbacks from last season.

Brees was tagged as a non-exclusive franchise player, meaning he can negotiate with other teams. Should Brees receive an offer from another team, the Chargers can either match it or receive two first-round draft choices from that club as compensation for losing Brees.

Smith said he made it clear to Brees' agent, Tom Condon, that the Chargers will insist on two No. 1 picks. Condon plans to check other teams' interest in Brees.

The Chargers got Philip Rivers in a draft-day deal with the New York Giants and gave him a \$40 million contract. But Rivers missed half of training camp in a holdout and threw just eight passes all season.

The Chargers have freed about \$21 million in salary cap space for next season, which would allow them to fit in Brees and Rivers, who is due about \$3 million in base pay.

Jets franchise DE Abraham

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Defensive end John Abraham was designated the New York Jets' franchise player on Friday with a one-year deal worth \$6.7 million.

Abraham was second on the Jets with 9½ sacks last season despite missing the team's final four games with a knee injury. He was voted to the Pro Bowl.

The franchise tag, the average of the salary for the NFL's top five defensive ends, allows the Jets to get two first-round draft choices for Abraham if he signs with another team.

Grantham hired as Browns' defensive coordinator

CLEVELAND — Todd Grantham, who spent the past three seasons coaching Houston's defensive linemen, was hired as defensive coordinator of the Cleveland Browns on Thursday. The Texans played a 3-4 defense, the kind Crennel used with New England and wants to implement with the Browns.

Bruschini OK for doing mini-stroke

Doctor says Patriots LB could probably resume playing

BY JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Details in an emergency call to police by his wife were an early indication that New England Patriots linebacker Tedy Bruschi suffered a mild stroke.

Bruschi, 34, a mainstay for three Super Bowl championships and one of the most popular Patriots, has been hospitalized since Wednesday after experiencing temporary numbness, blurred vision and headaches. The team said Thursday he was doing well after the stroke.

"It has been determined that his symptoms were the results of a mild stroke," team spokesman Stacey James said. "Tedy is in good condition and, as always, his spirits are high. He is walking and talking normally and stressed that he would like to thank everyone for keeping him and his family in their thoughts and prayers."

In a phone call with Bruschi's wife, Heidi, to 911 on Wednesday, she said, "He's having blurred vision, numbness on the right side of his body." He was admitted to Massachusetts General Hospital.

The Patriots said Bruschi could be released from the hospital on Friday.

"The outpouring of support has been overwhelming and the Bruschi family is very appreciative," James said.

An estimated 700,000 people per year in the United States suffer strokes. While broken blood vessels can cause them, a vast majority result from clots that block the brain's arteries.

Dr. David Liebeskind, associate neurology director of the UCLA Stroke Center in Los Angeles, said Bruschi's reported state of health indicated he had a good chance of recovery — and could possibly resume his playing career.

"Based on the fact that he's walking and talking, in a 31-year-old, it sounds like he could be able to play" football again, Liebeskind told The Associated Press. "A lot of people who have strokes while young tend to have no effects later. ... But things could change quickly. If he happens to have some numbness that persists, that may affect his playing."

Liebeskind emphasized that a battery of tests performed while Bruschi was hospitalized will determine the actual diagnosis.

Brian Mullen of the NFL's New York Islanders attempted a comeback two years after suffering a mild stroke and undergoing surgery to correct the heart problem that caused it in 1993. He had a seizure during his training and retired when no team would take a chance on him.

Houston Astros pitcher J.R. Richard, one of the most dominant right-handers of the late 1970s, had his career cut short when he suffered a blockage-caused stroke in 1980 at age 30. His comeback attempt was also unsuccessful.

Unlike heart attacks, strokes usually cause no pain, so the warning signs often are missed by victims and the people around them.

Symptoms include sudden weakness or numbness, dimness or loss of vision, difficulty or inability to speak and severe headaches.

A nine-year NFL veteran, the versatile Bruschi has been a star of the defense that helped the Patriots win three of the past four Super Bowls, including a 24-21 win over the Philadelphia Eagles on Feb. 6 in which he had an interception.

Bruschi was selected as the AFC's Defensive Player of the Week three times, including the first-round playoff victory over the Indianapolis Colts. A second-team Associated Press All-Pro selection, he ranked second on the team with 128 tackles and tied for second with three interceptions.

He also had two fumble recoveries and 20.3 playoff win over the Colts.

On Sunday, Bruschi played in his first Pro Bowl.

Associated Press writer Ryan Pearson in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

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Tumors snarl that NHL talks might reopen to save season

BY HELEN ELLIOTT
AND CHRIS FOSTER
Los Angeles Times

NEW YORK — Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux performed magnificent feats on the ice. Now, they're trying to do something more improbable: resurrect the NHL season, which was canceled Wednesday by Commissioner Gary Bettman.

Well-placed sources said Thursday that Gretzky, managing partner of the Phoenix Coyotes, and Lemieux, player-owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins, spoke to Bettman in an effort to explore whether the season can be salvaged. Sources said Trevor Lingen, president of the NHL Players' Association, and Mike Garner, the union's director of business relations, met with Bettman in New York on Thursday while players expressed concern about the failed negotiations to the union's Toronto office.

The activity, several sources said, may result in players assuring union chief Bob Goodenow to propose a deal that would include a salary cap set from \$45 million to \$46 million, and a prohibitive luxury tax. The union's offer, made on Tuesday, set the cap at \$49 million; the NHL's final offer, also made Tuesday, was for a \$45 million cap that wasn't linked to league-wide revenue.

Bettman and other NHL executives were contacted Thursday by

a few owners who expressed anxiety about the economic damage a cancellation might cause. Bettman was said to be out of his New York office most of the day and unavailable for comment.

Billy Daly, the NHL's chief legal officer, said Thursday he and Bettman had spoken to many owners and players in the days preceding the cancellation but that he had not been contacted by the union about reviving the season. "I'd be happy to take that call and happy to have that problem," he said, "but so far, no word."

Sources said the call might be made Friday. Gretzky told a radio station he had not been involved in "formal conversations" but said he had discussed the league's predicament with Lemieux. He also said he had had extensive talks with Shane Doan, the Coyotes' union representative and one of about a half-dozen players who teamed with some prominent agents, owners and general managers to kick-start the flagging negotiations last week.

A source said Gretzky had broached the idea of a salary-cap compromise. Bettman didn't reject it but said the union would have to make such an offer.

"There is a slight chance that this could work," said a source familiar with the back-channel efforts. "But it is a chance."

Bettman on Wednesday said

the NHL would have lost money for two years if the union had accepted the league's proposed \$42.5 million cap, but he would have taken short-term losses to put players back on the ice and generate revenue again in a five-month lockout. For the NHL, a cap of about \$45 million would have to be accompanied by other restrictions designed to discourage lavish spending.

"I would love nothing more than to strike while the iron's hot so to speak, and take advantage of whatever little momentum we were able to gain in the last week," Daly said.

Ted Saskin, senior director of the NHLPA, said players had not pushed the union to make a season-saving deal.

There are no back-channel talks, he said by phone. "What we're hearing are rumors about various owners and general managers who are looking for some deal," he said. "The P.A. is going to the negotiations because they are not satisfied with the way Gary ended the negotiations."

"I don't know if Gary said they would be willing to look at a higher number. We wish he would have said that in the negotiating process." The question now is whether the P.A. is going to give in to the pressure, said a source. "The pressure is significant, coming from all quarters, that the P.A. and the executive committee should put in a last-ditch offer."

Hokies stun No. 7 Duke

By HANK KURZ JR.

The Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Zebian Dowdell and his Virginia Tech teammates talked a lot about not being intimidated by Duke and forgetting their lopsided loss on the Blue Devils' home court just 18 days earlier.

The Hokies took the message to heart, and when Dowdell made a three-pointer with 14.6 seconds to play, Virginia Tech stunned No. 7 Duke 67-65 Thursday night.

"Now we belong," Dowdell said of the Hokies, in their first season in the Atlantic Coast Conference. "I mean, they have to take us serious now."

"Whether they like it or not, we're here."

The victory was one of the biggest in Hokies history, and came against the most unlikely opponent — the one with the reputation for working hard.

Behind 14 points and 18 rebounds from Coleman Collins, Virginia Tech outbounded Duke 49-32. The Hokies got J.J. Redick in foul trouble for the first time this season and they blocked 12 shots, making All-America candidates Redick and Shelden Williams work extra hard for shots.

"It's all about hustle and effort and attitude," Redick said. "You've got to go make it happen, and Virginia Tech made it happen tonight."

The Hokies (13-10, 6-6) ended a three-game losing streak and pulled into a three-way tie for fourth in the league with Maryland and Miami. The Blue Devils (18-4, 8-4), who beat Virginia Tech 100-65 less than three weeks ago, lost their second in a row.

"It's almost beyond words," second-year Hokies coach Seth



Duke guard Sean Dockery (15) struggles with Virginia Tech forward Coleman Collins (33) for possession of the ball on Thursday.

Greenberg said, "and anyone who knows me, to be beyond words is pretty hard for me."

The finish was frantic, with Redick hitting a three-pointer with 22.9 seconds left to give the Blue Devils a 65-64 lead, and Dowdell coming back with a jumper from the right wing that caused the sellout crowd to erupt.

After timeouts by each team, Duke inbounded the ball with 4.9 seconds left and Redick fed Daniel Ewing for a three-point try from right of the key that missed, bringing hundreds of fans rushing onto the court.

"Duke is Duke," Greenberg said, struggling to explain his emotions. "Ten Final Fours. Everything good you can think about college basketball, Duke epitomizes. To me, they're the Yankees, and I'm a Yankee fan."

Carlos Dixon led the Hokies with 18 points and more than held his own against Redick, who

scored 19 and but missed nine of 16 shots. Jamon Gordon added 17 points and had four blocks, and Dowdell scored 11.

"We just showed them what we're all about," Dixon said. "We knew we could play with them the first 15 minutes of the game. We had to just keep fighting and keep fighting and we did."

Collins, just 18, also blocked five shots. Shelden Williams had 16 points and Ewing had 13 for Duke.

Redick brought the Blue Devils back to 60-60 on a drive with 3:05 left. After Jeff King, a football tight end who joined the team after the season, made a baby hook to get the Hokies back in front, Williams scored inside to tie it again, setting up the thrilling finish.

Collins, 10-for-10 from the line in a game earlier this year, missed two with 1:11 left, but Redick missed a 17-footer at the other end.

Cardinals' late rally holds off Marquette

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — When the Louisville Cardinals found themselves down by 11 points to Marquette with 5:38 left, they didn't think of turning to their prolific offense to bail them out of another upset.

"We had to win this game with defense, not offense," Cardinals coach Rick Pitino said after Francisco Garcia's three-pointer with 2.6 seconds left capped a 14-0 run that gave Louisville (22-4, 10-2 Conference USA) a 64-61 victory Thursday night.

The Cardinals clamped down on the Golden Eagles, who turned the ball over once and missed three free throws, three three-pointers, a jumper and two layups on their final nine possessions.

"We just kept digging in on defense," said Garcia, who scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half, helping the 12th-ranked Cardinals avoid their second loss in three games. Travis Dierzer's three-pointer at the buzzer bounced off the rim.

"You couldn't ask for a better shot. I just missed it, missed it bad. It was the story of my night," said Dierzer, who also clanked two layups off the rim in the final minutes, finishing 2-for-16 from the floor in what the senior called his worst college performance.

"They played good defense and we missed some layups. I missed some layups. I'm supposedly the best player on the floor. I should be able to make layups."

The Golden Eagles tried to

run the shot clock down in the final 5 minutes, and they ended up with hurried shots instead of good looks.

"It's feast or famine sometimes when you do that," Pitino said.

No. 10 Arizona 92, Oregon 67: Salim Stoudamire shook off a slow start to score 22 points and the host Wildcats made 21 of 30 shots in the second half.

Channing Frye scored 19 points and blocked a career-high seven shots in Arizona's fifth consecutive victory. Hassan Adams scored 17, 12 in the second half, and Chris Rodgers had 11 points and a career-best nine assists for the Pac-10-leading Wildcats.

Arizona (22-4, 12-2 Pac-10) was 20-for-26 in the second half as Gonzaga retained first place in the bench with three minutes to play.

No. 13 Gonzaga 90, San Diego 73: At Spokane, Wash., Derick Ruvino scored 29 points and Gonzaga retained first place in the West Coast Conference.

J.P. Batista added 19 points for Gonzaga (20-4, 10-2 WCC), which won seven games in a row and reached 20 victories for the eighth season in a row.

Gonzaga is 35-0 at home when ranked and has a 23-game winning streak at home, third-longest in the nation.

No. 25 Villanova 66, Seton Hall 52: East Rutherford, N.J., Curtis Sumpter scored 25 points, hitting the key baskets late to beat the Wildcats (16-6, 6-5 Big East) to their fourth victory in five games.

Randy Foye and Mike Nardi each had 10 points for Villanova. Andre Sweet had 11 points for Seton Hall (11-11, 3-8).

One: Illinois finds right balance while remaining undefeated

ONE, FROM BACK PAGE

"We don't have THE star," coach Bruce Weber said. "We have balance, we have unselfishness, and that makes us more of a team."

The Illini certainly don't lack for personality. They're a first-class team behind Devon Williams' stout gaffes, and his Weber initiation is so perfect it even fuses teammates sometimes.

"It's so funny," Luther Head said, chuckling. "He's got it down pat, from the smile to the expressions to everything."

Head is a Pentecostal minister — his teammates call him "The Rev" — who still finds time during the season to speak to church groups. Brown is a former quarterback whose dazzling quickness earned him the moniker "The One-Man Fast Break," and teammates say he's often a ringleader for their social outings.

"We've got a lot of characters on this team," Williams said.

The Illini figured out a while ago that their sun is far better than any of their players off and on the court.

"With our teams, you can focus on one guy. With us, you can't focus on just one guy because other people will beat you,"

forward James Augustine said. "When one player's not playing well, everybody else steps it up and helps out the team." Just check out their stats. None of the Illini ranks in the top 50 in the country in scoring, but all five starters average in double figures. Five players have been high scorer in a game and five have been the top rebounder.

Most telling, they rank third in the country with 19.2 assists per game while committing only 10.8 turnovers.

"We like being up there in the top assists in the nation, and top in assist-to-turnover ratio," Williams said. "That's a big key to our success, how unselfish we are. No one guy wants to be a superstar."

No one's a better example of that than Williams. He might be Illinois' best pure player, the preseason pick as Big Ten player of the year, candidate for the Wooden Award and someone who's capable of going off for 30 points on any night. Yet he's fourth on the team in scoring, his average is down slightly from last year and he's the only starter who has yet to win Big Ten player of the week honors. In the Feb. 6 game against Indiana, he scored one point, a free throw with 2:15 remaining.

He is, however, ranked 12th in the coun-

try with 6.9 assists a game. With 178 assists already, he's on pace to break the school's season record. And that Indiana game? He had 11 assists, one shy of his season and career high.

"I'm having a great season. My team's 26-0 and I'm the point guard on my team," Williams said, a touch of defiance creeping into his voice. "I'm really not worried about myself. I'm worried about wins. If we get wins, that's all I'm concerned with."

Coaches in every sport at every level beg, plead and prod their players for that kind of selflessness and unity. For the Illini, though, it comes naturally.

The team has been unusually close since the juniors arrived on campus. Several already knew each other from growing up in the Chicago area, and the rest were quickly welcomed into the fold.

They'd see movies together. Go bowling. Play cards or Monopoly at someone's apartment.

Bill Self's sudden departure for Kansas in April 2003 brought them even closer. The Illini love Weber now, but adjusting to a new coach is always tough, and the players had to lean on each other.

They're even tight with each other's families. When Augustine came out of the lock-

er room last weekend, Head's aunt greeted him with a hug. Head made sure to say hello to his aunt's twin, complimenting her on her hair.

"I've been on teams that had groups that were close, but as far as mixing and matching, I've never been on a team that's been so close all the time," said senior Jack Ingram, who transferred from Tulsa before the 2002-03 season. "I could go hang out with any of the guys and feel just as comfortable as if I was with my roommate."

That closeness has made it easier to deal with the pressure and publicity that comes with being No. 1. If someone is slacking off or not doing something right, his teammates will call him on it. There's so much teasing and ribbing that it's impossible for anyone to get a big head.

Not even Weber is immune. When his cell phone started ringing after a national TV appearance recently, he knew without thinking it was his players calling to ring him.

"We just get along," Williams said. "We are a family. That's how they feel."

And they know how lucky they are — regardless of the season — because

"It's a very, very unique team," senior center Nick Smith said. "It's not something you see all the time."

Johnson puts focus on winning Nextel Cup

BY JENNA FRYER

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Jimmie Johnson spent last season spread across the country, pulled in every direction on and off the track.

In New York, he was helping his fiancée relocate to North Carolina, where they were supervising the construction of their first home together. In California, he was fighting hard to keep precious childhood relationships alive.

Somewhere in between, he nearly won his first NASCAR championship.

With all the distractions now eliminated, there's no telling how focused Johnson will be this season on finishing the job.

"You know, last year I was just getting pulled in so many ways and I was really spread so thin," Johnson said. "And now it's just kind of slowed down and given me the opportunity to focus on winning a championship."

Don't blame a hectic schedule

on ruining Johnson's title hopes last year.

With everything going on, he still managed to win a series-best eight races and lead the Nextel Cup points standings for most of the season. But his lead was erased under NASCAR's new 10-race playoff system, and two poor finishes quickly put him in position to finish far back in the 10-driver competition.

But he didn't quit.

With his title hopes all but over following consecutive accidents, he clawed his way back into contention with three consecutive wins and four in five weeks.

And he did it under the most trying of circumstances. As he headed to Victory Lane at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway last October, NASCAR officials stopped his team to break the heartbreaking news that a plane carrying 10 close friends and co-workers from Hendrick Motorsports crashed en route to the race.

The loss rocked the Hendrick

organization, which is run more like a family than a billion dollar business. With team owner Rick Hendrick home, grieving the loss of his brother, son, twin nieces and the others, Johnson continued to win.

It gave Hendrick the strength to return to the race track, and he was on hand for the final event to watch Johnson fall just eight points short of winning the championship.

"I look back at what I personally went through last year and what Hendrick Motorsports did, and to see us finish up as strongly as we did with all we were faced with ... just to get back here ready for a new year is an accomplishment," Johnson said.

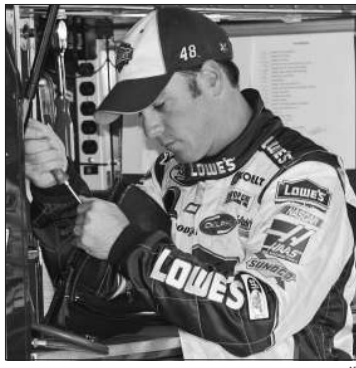
He's come charging out of the gate already this season, winning last week's exhibition race at Daytona International Speedway and then qualifying second for Sunday's Daytona 500. He also was chosen as the preseason favorite to win the Nextel Cup title in a media vote, taking 87 of the 213 first-place votes.

"We're proud everyone feels we are a threat for the championship," Johnson said. "It's nice to have it on paper. But until you have that trophy sitting at your house, it doesn't mean much."

If he does bring it home, it will be to the new house he has been building in south Charlotte, N.C., with new wife, Chandra.

The two were married in St. Barts on Dec. 11 — a whirlwind affair that kicked off in Miami with a bachelor party thrown by teammate Jeff Gordon, a stop in Europe so he could compete in the Race of Champions Nations Cup, and finally the wedding.

When he finally made it to his honeymoon, he was exhausted



Jimmie Johnson adjusts his head-and-neck restraint system during practice Wednesday at Daytona International Speedway.

and claims he slept his way through it.

But through it all, Johnson has remained grounded and tried to be the same person today that he was in the early 1990s when he was winning off-road championships in California. Still close with many of his friends — a handful of his California buddies were in his wedding — he's also lost a few in his first three Nextel Cup seasons.

A laid-back California kid best known for being Gordon's protégé when he burst into the Cup scene, Johnson is now a full-blown superstar capable of eclipsing his mentor in popularity.

Not straying too far from his roots, though, has been his biggest challenge.

"I'm more comfortable in my shoes now and I've learned you can't keep everybody happy all the time. You've got to go by what makes you happy in your heart and take it from there," Johnson said. "It's tough at times because you upset a fan or you upset someone from your past ... you are being pulled so many ways and honestly, there's my wife and my race team and after that I don't have a lot of time left."

"I just have to roll with it and hope that everybody understands from there."

Roush, Red Sox owners might join forces

BY JENNA FRYER

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Baseball's champion could be teaming up with NASCAR's.

Looking to tap into the popularity of the World Series-winning Boston Red Sox, Roush Racing has had preliminary talks with Boston owner John Henry about forming a possible partnership.

Rumors circulating around Daytona International Speedway on Thursday had Henry possibly buying a stake in the lucrative Roush organization. But Roush general manager Geoff Smith said any talks with the baseball owner concerned cross-promotion with the Red Sox.

"Jack Roush as long as he lives is going to want to control and operate these race teams," Smith said. "Not to rule out that there isn't a proposition that could be advanced for some sort of affiliation at some time, but right now

we like the prospect of an affiliation from a marketing standpoint.

Henry did not immediately return an e-mail request for comment.

Garage insiders have described Henry as a "racing junkie" who competes in a high-tech computerized NASCAR league on his own personal simulator. He attended last year's NASCAR race in New Hampshire, and was a guest of NASCAR at their December awards banquet.

Henry was also spotted at NASCAR's Daytona headquarters last week.

Roush officials, meanwhile, were his guest at Game 4 of the AL Championship Series against the New York Yankees.

Smith said the Roush teams, which include reigning Nextel Cup champion Kurt Busch, Matt Kenseth, Mark Martin and Carl Edwards, are interested in tapping into the Red Sox fan base and possibly carrying the team point scheme on one of their cars at the New Hampshire race.

Burning rubber

Goodyear officials pulled another

600 tires out of circulation Thursday because of a manufacturer problem that was causing them to blister or lose the tread.

NASCAR's only tire supplier had already called back 300 tires because the same problems surfaced last weekend. In all, Goodyear took 900 tires from the same group of serial numbers that they feared might suffer from "tread delamination."

"We want to do everything we can to provide the best product we can," said Goodyear's Stu Grant. "We met with NASCAR at 7 o'clock this morning after we got our data and told them what we were going to do, explained our results."

Goodyear officials said they actually only had problems with eight tires, but pulled the rest as a precaution before the twin qualifying races. Grant said Goodyear workers had been through the Nextel Cup garage Thursday morning to take the remaining tires from the teams.

Grant insisted there would not be a tire shortage for Sunday's season-opening Daytona 500.

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Jimmie Johnson (48) slides in front of Kevin Harvick (29) and Mark Martin (6) as they exit the second turn at Daytona International Speedway during the second of two Gatorade Duel 150 races on Thursday. Harvick, who once was suspended for rough driving, triggered the wreck by bumping Johnson.

Familiar sights at Daytona

DEI cars near front for 500; Harvick in trouble again

BY PAUL NEBBERRY

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Michael Waltrip and Dale Earnhardt Jr. are running up front at Daytona. Kevin Harvick is stirring up trouble.

Sound familiar? Yep, the new NASCAR season has many of the same of themes — and we're still a couple of days away from the Daytona 500.

Start with Waltrip and Earnhardt, who have dominated Daytona for Dale Earnhardt Inc. They were terrible in qualifying (Waltrip was 33rd, Earnhardt 39th) and lackluster in practice. But once DEI got into racing mode, it was business as usual.

Waltrip, a two-time Daytona 500 winner, edged his teammate, who won the race last year, in the first of two 150-mile qualifying races Thursday.

"I swear on the bible that we haven't been sandbagging," Earnhardt said, failing to convince all those drivers who watched DEI's 1-2 finish.

Tony Stewart won the second 150-miler, but only after he dodged a crash that took out most of the top contenders. Not surprisingly, Harvick was right in the middle of things.

The volatile driver, who served a one-race suspension for his antics in 2002, bumped race leader Jimmie Johnson from behind coming through the second turn.

The resulting melee knocked out Johnson, left Harvick's car in a heap and also took out Mark Martin, Joe Nemechek and Rusty Wallace.

Afterward, Nemechek threw a water bottle at Harvick as he emerged from the infield care center. Johnson called on Harvick to be fired by his team or at least fined by NASCAR.

"He just drives stupid," Nemechek said. "He'll get it back. It was totally uncalculated what happened out there."

NASCAR officials moved quickly to diffuse the situation. They summoned Harvick and Johnson,

along with their owners and crew chiefs, to an infield summit meeting. Harvick admitted he was at fault and shook hands with Johnson. The two drivers agreed to meet Thursday night at a secret location — with no one else around — to smooth out a feud that dates to last season.

"We told them they could either work it out among themselves," NASCAR spokesman Jim Hunter said, "or we'd work it out for them."

The wreck Thursday will go down as a "racing incident," Hunter said. But any more problems between the drivers will lead to stiff fines — maybe even suspensions.

No such problems for Waltrip and Earnhardt, who have combined to win three of the last four Daytona 500s. Waltrip passed Junior on the final straightaway and held off the No. 8 car by 0.30 seconds, about half a car length.

"We certainly caught a lot of flak over the last week about the way our cars qualified," Waltrip said. "This silenced it."

Auto racing scoreboard

Daytona 500 lineup

NASCAR Nextel Cup
Sunday
At Daytona International Speedway
Daytona Beach, Fla.
Lap length: 2.5 miles
(Start position in parentheses)
Race One

- (88) Dale Jarrett, Ford, 188,312 mph, 150-2.
- (22) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet, 188,170 mph, 150-1.
- (15) Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet, 1st 150-1.
- (20) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet, 1st 150-2.
- (6) Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet, 2nd 150-2.
- (31) Jeff Burton, Chevrolet, 2nd 150-1.
- (22) Mike Skinner, Dodge, 3rd 150-2.
- (37) Kevin Leavine, Dodge, 3rd 150-1.
- (12) Ryan Newman, Dodge, 4th 150-1.
- (11) Martin Truex Jr., Chevrolet, 4th 150-2.
- (21) Ricky Rudd, Ford, 5th 150-1.
- (10) Scott Riggs, Chevrolet, 5th 150-2.
- (37) Kurt Busch, Ford, 6th 150-1.
- (17) Matt Kenseth, Ford, 6th 150-2.
- (24) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet, 7th 150-1.
- (22) Scott Wimmer, Dodge, 8th 150-1.
- (12) Casey Mears, Dodge, 8th 150-2.
- (40) Sterling Marlin, Dodge, 8th 150-1.
- (5) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 9th 150-2.
- (38) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet, 10th 150-1.
- (10) Kenny Wallace, Chevrolet, 10th 150-2.
- (22) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet, 11th 150-1.
- (16) Greg Biffle, Ford, 11th 150-2.
- (19) Jeremy Mayfield, Dodge, 15th 150-1.
- (40) Mark Martin, Ford, 2nd 150-2.
- (77) Travis Kvapil, Dodge, 14th 150-1.
- (26) Carl Edwards, Ford, 16th 150-2.
- (25) Brian Vickers, Chevrolet, 19th 150-1.
- (41) Casey Mears, Dodge, 17th 150-1.
- (29) Kevin Harvick, Chevrolet, 21st 150-2.
- (10) Ken Schrader, Dodge, 19th 150-1.
- (31) Mike Petty, Ford, 2nd 150-2.
- (14) Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet, 23rd 150-1.
- (10) Mike Bliss, Chevrolet, 22nd 150-1.
- (25) Rusty Wallace, Dodge, 14th 150-2.
- (38) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet, 22nd 150-2.
- (11) Jason Leffler, Chevrolet, 38th 150-1.
- (36) Boris Sadler, Chevrolet, 187,322 mph.
- (14) John Andretti, Ford, 186,324 mph.
- (43) Mike Wallace, Chevrolet, 185,068 mph.

Failed to qualify

- (44) Kerry Earnhardt, Chevrolet, 183,012 mph.
- (7) Robby Gordon, Chevrolet, 184,511 mph.
- (40) Johnny Sauter, Dodge, 184,928 mph.
- (27) Kirk Sheldermire, Ford, 184,665 mph.
- (6) Hermie Sadler, Ford, 184,211 mph.
- (89) Morgan Shepherd, Dodge, 182,769 mph.
- (11) Jason Leffler, Chevrolet, 182,393 mph.
- (13) Greg Sacks, Chevrolet, 182,024 mph.
- (52) Stanton Barrett, Chevrolet, 183,058 mph.
- (55) Derrick Cocke, Chevrolet, 182,275 mph.
- (34) Randy LaJoie, Chevrolet, 181,159 mph.
- (14) Ryan Guseman, Ford, 178,409 mph.
- (58) Andy Belmont, Ford, 174,883 mph.

NOTE: The top two positions in the Daytona lineup were determined at last week's time trials. Positions 3-29 were determined by Thursday's 150-mile race. Michael Wallace (43) was the first fast qualifier from last week's time trials that did not qualify through Thursday's races.

Gatorade Duels

NASCAR Nextel Cup
Thursday
At Daytona International Speedway
Daytona Beach, Fla.
Lap length: 2.5 miles
(Start position in parentheses)
Race One

- (18) Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet, 60, 553,109.
- (22) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet, 60, 538,188.
- (20) Mike Skinner, Dodge, 60, 533,188.
- (16) Ryan Newman, Dodge, 60, 528,188.
- (15) Kyle Busch, Ford, 60, 538,188.
- (4) Kurt Busch, Ford, 60, 523,788.
- (5) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet, 60, 522,688.
- (12) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (11) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (22) Kenny Wallace, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (17) Kerry Earnhardt, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (19) Jason Leffler, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (19) Greg Biffle, Ford, 60, 521,688.
- (25) Travis Kvapil, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (14) Carl Edwards, Ford, 60, 521,688.
- (15) Mike Wallace, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (19) Casey Mears, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (26) Stanton Barrett, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (18) Ken Schrader, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (77) Kyle Petty, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (21) Dale Jarrett, Ford, 60, 521,688.
- (15) Mike Bliss, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (23) Johnny Sauter, Dodge, 52, 521,688.
- (10) Kasey Kahne, Dodge, 52, 521,688.
- (19) Hermie Sadler, Ford, 46, 521,688.
- (26) Elliott Sadler, Ford, 45, 521,688.
- (26) Carl Edwards, Ford, 45, 521,688.
- (27) Randy LaJoie, Chevrolet, 41, 521,688.
- (27) Morgan Shepherd, Dodge, 3, 521,688.

Race Statistics

Time of Race 1 hour, 4 minutes, 5 seconds.
Winner's Average Speed: 140.442 mph.
Margin of Victory: 0.029 seconds.

Race Two

- (13) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet, 60, 553,109.
- (19) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet, 60, 538,188.
- (20) Kevin Leavine, Dodge, 60, 538,188.
- (25) Rusty Wallace, Dodge, 60, 538,188.
- (38) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet, 60, 538,188.
- (22) Matt Kenseth, Ford, 60, 523,788.
- (22) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (10) Ken Schrader, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (16) Sterling Marlin, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (10) Boris Sadler, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (14) John Andretti, Ford, 60, 521,688.
- (17) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (21) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (14) Derrike Cocke, Chevrolet, 60, 521,688.
- (15) Jeremy Mayfield, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (25) Jeff Green, Dodge, 60, 521,688.
- (17) Kirk Sheldermire, Ford, 60, 521,688.
- (18) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet, 59, 521,688.
- (15) John Andretti, Ford, 59, 521,688.
- (20) Mike Bliss, Chevrolet, 59, 521,688.
- (11) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 35, 521,688.
- (22) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet, 35, 521,688.
- (13) Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet, 35, 521,688.
- (24) Rusty Wallace, Dodge, 35, 521,688.
- (25) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet, 35, 521,688.
- (58) Andy Belmont, Ford, 24, 521,688.
- (27) Kirk Sheldermire, Ford, 2, 521,688.
- (28) Greg Sacks, Dodge, 2, 521,688.

Race Statistics

Time of Race 1 hour, 2 minutes, 55 seconds.
Winner's Average Speed: 146.163 mph.
Margin of Victory: Under Caution.

Tuberville signs seven-year contract with Auburn

The Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville has signed a new seven-year contract that will pay him \$2 million this year and increase by \$200,000 each successive year.

Tuberville and the school agreed in principle to the deal in December, about a week before the Tigers completed a 13-0 season with a 16-13 victory over Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl.

The contract announced Thursday by the school will pay Tuberville a base salary of \$210,000, with the remainder coming from endorsements and radio and television deals. Tuberville's previous package was worth \$1.5 million.

Sports briefs

Auburn's buyout and Tuberville's penalty for leaving is \$7 million for the first two years of the contract, \$6 million for 2007-08, \$5 million for 2009, \$4 million for 2010 and \$3 million for 2011.

Tuberville is 51-24 in six seasons at Auburn. Last season, he led the No. 2 Tigers to the most victories in school history.

Winless Savannah State fires basketball coach

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Savannah State coach Ed Daniels was fired Thursday, three days after the Ti-

gers became the second NCAA Division I team in the past 50 years to have a winless season.

Savannah State finished the season on 25 after a 49-44 loss to Florida A&M on Monday night. Prairie View, the only other Division I team in the past half century to go winless.

Southern Mississippi went 0-24 in 1971-72, but that was one of three seasons that it had been stripped of Division I status because the NCAA objected to its weak schedule. The Citadel was 0-17 in 1954-55.

Austrian Walchofer wins men's World Cup downhill

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCH-

EN, Germany — Austrian Michael Walchofer won a men's World Cup downhill race Friday, with countryman Herman Maier second and American Bode Miller third.

Walchofer charged down the Kandahar course in 1 minute, 57.79 seconds to win the first World Cup race since the Alpine world ski championships ended last Sunday.

Maier, winner of the giant slalom at the world championships in Bormio, Italy, finished 99 seconds behind Walchofer.

Munich won't bid for 2014 Winter Games

BERLIN — The city of Munich will not bid to host the 2014 Winter Olympics.

The decision was made Friday during a meeting attended by the German national Olympic committee chairman, Germany's minister of sports and the mayor of Munich.

Last month, Germany's Olympic committee failed to endorse Munich's candidacy, saying the city needed to prepare a more detailed proposal. The committee suggested a bid for the 2018 Games.

'98 World Cup star Djorkaeff to play for MetroStars

PARIS — Youri Djorkaeff, 36, a member of the French team that won the 1998 World Cup and 2000 European championship, has signed with the MetroStars of Major League Soccer.

2004 title-winners

No returning champions receive No. 1 seeds in new weight classes

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany — None of the six returning DODDS-Europe wrestling champions were among the top seeds as the 2005 tournament began Friday.

One of those champions was eliminated on the first day of the two-day tournament held at the Tony Bass Fitness Center.

Tournament official Keri Domko, working her final European tournament, said that when the tournament committee awarded No. 1 seeds Thursday, it meant no disrespect to the returning champions.

"Most of them are in different weight classes this year," she said. "There was no way we could take their status as last-year's champions into account."

Reigning 112-pound champ Jonathan Scott of London Central drew a No. 2, behind Würzburg's Jonathan Painter at 130.

Defending 125-pound champ Jesse Painter of Würzburg was seeded second to Ramstein freshman Coty Rinehart at 135.

Last year's 152-pound champion, Andrew Zachar of Heidelberg, was judged a step below Guadalupe Flores of Naples at 160.

Karl Saucier of Ramstein, who won the title at 140 last year, was seeded third at 145 behind top seed Tony Gagnon of Wiesbaden and Gary King of Vicenza, the defending 145-pound champ.

And 130-pound champion Michael Monaco of Naples was ranked second at 140 to Bitburg's Devon Gardner, whom he beat for last year's 130 title.

Gardner, a European champ as a sophomore before losing to Monaco 6-4 in last year's title match, was 16-0 this season at 130. Monaco was 17-1 in official matches, and 2-1 in exhibitions against Vicenza's Gary King, the No. 2 seed at 145.

"They might have held that loss against me," Monaco mused as he lost a quarterfinal bout Friday against Bitburg sophomore Jamie Watts.

Jesse Painter thought an influx of new talent helped explain the apparent downplaying of the returning champs.

"The seedings are decent," he said as he warmed up for his 135-pound quarterfinal against



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Brunsell's Kevin LaBelle, top, pinned Vicenza's Kyle Stammer in a first-round match at 135.

Daniel Herring of Bamberg, "Coty Rinehart is the next good wrestler to look for. He really knows what he's doing."

Rinehart, an Ohio middle school state champ last season, is one of two Royal wrestlers to earn a No. 1 seed in his first year in DODDS-Europe. Far East champ Cole Maxey also was unseeded in his first season at Ramstein on his way to the top seed at 215.

Two other Ramstein wrestlers, Noah Sheppard at 125 and James Horst at 275, also earned top seeds for this tournament.

The other No. 1 is: Anthony Davis of Würzburg (103); Daniel Brunal of Bitburg (112); Gary Vogt of Aviano (119); Jordan Yanka of Heidelberg (152); Bryan Isbell of Bamberg (171); and newcomer Chad Abramson of Wiesbaden (189).

Heidelberg's Jeremy Brady seemingly supported the seedings when he knocked Saucier off 8-4 in the quarterfinals.

Brady, the highest seed to fall in Friday's quarters. That distinction fell to second-seeded Matt Briegel of Naples, who was pinned by Texas Ely of Heidelberg at 5:47 of their 17-minute match.

None of the No. 10s lost, but Monaco, among others, hopes to change that on Saturday.

"I'd like to be ranked No. 1," he said. "I'll just have to prove myself again."

Semifinal and finals in all weight classes are scheduled for Saturday. Championships are scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m.

E-mail Rusty Bryan at: bryan@mail.strips.esd.mil

Alconbury's Kyle Lucas, top, has Alex Orona of Hohenfels in a painful hold during their 145-pound match in the DODDS-Europe wrestling championships Friday at Wiesbaden, Germany. Lucas defeated Orona.

MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

High school scoreboard

European championships

WIESBADEN ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany — Results from the championship bracket Friday on Day 1 of the two-day 2005 DODDS-Europe high school wrestling championships, ending Saturday at the Tony Bass Fitness Center (top 4 seedings in parentheses), admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students. Semifinals begin at 10:30 a.m., fifth-place matches at 1:30 p.m., third-place at 2:30 p.m. Finals are scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m.

103 pounds — First round: Anthony Davis (Würzburg) bye; Chris Toner (2, Heidelberg) bye; Troy Fortunato (3, Ramstein) bye; Ryan Singleton (4, Bitburg) bye; Avia Ahuja (American School in London) pin Curtis Parker (London Central) 1:36; Peter Mochkinec (ASL) pin John Grant (Wzbg) 2:25; Stephen Gillespie (Kaiserlautern) pin Chris Spenser (Wiesbaden) 2:19; Robert De Carlos (Vies) pin James Rich (Fornaco) 3:15. Quarterfinals: Davis pin Ahuja 5:36; Singleton pin Mochkinec 1:05; Gillespie (top seed) 10:20; Toner pin De Carlos 3:33. Semifinals: Davis-Singleton; Fortunato-Toner.

112 — First round: Daniel Brunal (1, Bitburg) bye; 2-7 Schwartz (2, Aviano); Eric Obermeyer (4, ASL) bye; Nicholas Rogers (4, Patch) bye; Kyle Tyne (Lakenheath) pin Jon Hoffmeyer (Jordan Borne) (Hans) 1:10; Ian Brenner (Aviano) pin Keitzler (Rosen) 1:10. Quarterfinals: Brunal-Rogers; Hoffmeyer over Tyne; Rogers pin Keitzler 1:54; Brenner over Obermeyer 5-4; Schwartz def. Bender 8-2. Semifinals: Brunal-Rogers; Brenner-Schwartz.

119 — First round: Gary Vogt (1, Avio) bye; Paul Mosseman (2, Brussels) bye; Michael Zachar (4, ASL) bye; Daniel McEnery (4, Bamberg) bye; Daniel Roberts (Ansbach) pin Huyen Roberts (London Central) 3:36; David Crow (Baumbacher) pin, dec. Kris Higgins (Wies) 13-6; Ryan Goudy (Palm) 1:23; Harrison Hayes (Kais) 15-6; Lefroyal Tuff (Napoli) pin Brian Ruskey (Palm) 2:37. Quarterfinals: Vogt pin Roberts 3:45; Crow def. McEnery 5-2; Zachar pin, dec. Gough 14-2; Mosseman pin Tuff 3:23. Semifinals: Vogt-Crow; Zachar-Mosseman.

125 — First round: Noah Sheppard (1, Ramstein) bye; Ben Stevenson (2, Naples) bye; Andrew Monco (3, Heid) bye; Stephen Den (4, Bamberg) bye; Jamie Jung (by forfeit over Jesse Best (MHP); Steven Cole (Brus) pin John Swinson (Ansb) 1:27; Brandon Foster (Wies) def. Michael Walker (Baumbacher) 6-4; Jake Bell (Lake) pin Jonathan Stimmel (LC) 4:48.

Quarterfinals: Sheppard tech fall Jung 16-0, Cole maj, dec. Den 17-4; Moon tech fall Foster 17-0; Stevenson pin Bell 1:58. Semifinals: Sheppard-Cole; Moon-Stevenson.

130 — First round: Jonathan Painter (1, Wzbg) bye; Jonathan Scott (2, LC) bye; Adam Johnson (3, Heid) bye; Anthony Messina (4, BBO) bye; Kent Korea (Rams) pin Adam Espinoza (Han) 4:22; Jason McCall (Napoli) def. Matt Ramsey (Lake) 10:38; Aaron Perry (Palm) pin Craig Campbell (Lake) 3:18; Chris Williams (Giesden) pin Eric Roberts (Avi) 47. Quarterfinals: J. Painter maj, dec. Norris 12-2; Messina pin McCall 3:17; Johnson maj, dec. Perry 13-0; Scott tech fall Williams 16-0. Semifinals: J. Painter-Messina; Johnson-Scott.

135 — First round: Cory Reinhart (1, Ramstein) bye; Jesse Painter (2, Wzbg) bye; Sean White (3, Lale) bye; Doug O'Meara (4, Patch) bye; Levin LaBelle (Brus) pin Kyle Stammer (Vicenza) 5:06; Matt Anand (AFORTH) def. Steve Porter (Wies) 20:41; Michael Kane (Rams) pin David Kincaid (Bibb) 4:52. Quarterfinals: Reinhart pin LaBelle 5:40; O'Meara pin Kincaid 3:11; Kane def. Whittin 15-3; Porter over Herring 3:57. Semifinals: Reinhart-O'Meara; Kane-Jane; Painter.

140 — First round: Devon Gardner (1, Bibb) bye; Michael Monaco (2, Napoli) bye; Gary Figueroa (3, Rams) bye; Haden Baker (4, Lake) bye; Ashton Jagdahl (ASL) pin Mike Kestler (LC) 2:27; Andrew Hoffman (Heid) pin Steven Jewell (Wies) 3:08; Matt Winton (Vicz) def. Dominic Raschke (Ansb) 1:11; Jamie Watts (Bibb) def. Nate Apodaca (Hans) 8-4. Quarterfinals: Gardner pin Jagdahl 1:22; Hoffman def. Baker 6-4; Figueroa def. Winton 9-4; Monaco def. Watts 4-0. Semifinals: Gardner-Hoffman; Figueroa-Monaco.

145 — First round: Tony Gagnon (1, Wies) bye; Gary King (2, Vicz) bye; Karl Saucier (3, Rams) bye; Gary Voelch (4, Patch); Michael Lahuten (Napoli) pin Christian Grimm (Ansb) 2:43; Mike B. (ASL) def. Alex Orona (Hans) 10:15; Jeremy Brady (Heid) def. Ian Lange (MHP) 8-2; David Villanova (Bibb) maj, dec. Matt Parker (Brus) 10-1. Quarterfinals: Gagnon pin Lahuten 3:27; King def. Villanova 6-5; Brady def. Saucier 8-4; Grimm pin Villanova 6-5. Semifinals: Gagnon-Villanova; Brady-King.

152 — First round: Ryan Yokota (1, Heid) bye; Mike McClain (2, MHP) bye; Logan Rainforth (3, Rams) bye; Michael Aque (4, Napoli) bye; Andre Alsop (Heid) def. David Zingebach (Ansb) 11:30; Brandon Walker (Napoli) by forfeit, over Matt Apodaca (Hans); Shawn Renaud (Bibb) pin Alex Higgins (ASL) 1:43;

Jared Waters (AFN) pin Ivan Azucena (LC) 1:48. Quarterfinals: Yokota pin Alsop 3:47; Aque pin B. Walker 3:47; Rainforth pin Renaud 5:21; McClain pin Waters 5:48. Semifinals: Yokota-Aque; Rainforth-McClain.

160 — First round: Guadalupe Flores (1, Napoli) bye; Andrew Zachar (2, Heid) bye; Elliott Boltz (3, Heid) bye; Matthew Alexander (4, Wies) bye; Paul Sharp (Napoli) pin Luis Alvin (ASL) 1:15; Craig Hornum (Lake) pin Henry Marsh (ASL) 1:59; Joel Smith (Rams) tech fall Sean McClain (Rams) 16-0; Matt Hall (AFN) def. Sean Hips (Wzbg) 7:21. Quarterfinals: Flores pin Stuart 4:45; Alexander tech fall Hornum 19-3; Boltz def. Smith 12-5; A. Zachar maj, dec. Hall 10-4. Semifinals: Flores-Alexander; Boltz-A. Zachar.

171 — First round: Bryan Isbell (1, Brue) bye; Matt Briegel (2, Napoli) bye; Alex Cook (3, Vicz) bye; K.C. Brown (4, Heid) bye; Paul Huey (Wies) def. Nic Leon (Avi) 10:7; Madison Hayes (Lake) pin Robert Fick (Wzbg) 5:07; Eric Dyan (Rams) pin Noah Song (Napoli) 2:38; Alex Ely (Heid) pin Jesse Tate (LC) 3-4. Quarterfinals: Isbell def. Huey 10:13; M. Hayes def. Brown 12-4; Dyan def. Song 7-4. Ely pin Briegel 5:47. Semifinals: Isbell-Huey; Briegel-M. Hayes; Dyan-Ely.

189 — First round: Chad Abramson (1, Wies) bye; Todd Thom (2, Napoli) bye; Eric Popp (3, Brue) bye; Curtis (4, Wzbg) bye; Adam Golden (Ansb) pin Aaron Peters (Lake); Michael Beuchene (Palm) pin John Winsten (Rams) pin John Kustander (Ansb) 3:02; Philip Johnson (Heid) pin Matthew Monco (Gies) 4:19. Quarterfinals: Abramson pin Golden 1:56; Abramson pin Beuchene 5:11; Popp pin Winsten 3:00; Thom pin Johnson 1:44.

215 — First round: Cole Maxey (1, Rams) bye; Mike Evans (2, Ansb) bye; Richard Brandon (3, SHP) bye; Peter Lopez (4, Wzbg) bye; Adam Swenidge (Ansb) pin Ryan Linette (LC) 3:15; Brandon Simmons (Heid) pin Chris Garlick (Wzbg) 2:22; Torrence (ASL) pin Nick Pettit (Rams) 3:25; Daniel Swartz (Napoli) def. Alex Lazaridis (ASL) 18-2. Quarterfinals: Maxey pin Evans 5:00; Brandon pin Lopez 8-0; Swenidge pin Pettit 3:48; Swartz def. Simmons 10-0; Brandon pin Smith 4-0; Swartz pin Stewart 8-2. Semifinals: Maxey-Simmons; Brandon-Stewart.

275 — First round: James Horst (1, Rams) bye; Brian Bowles (2, Patch) bye; Gregg Surpris (3, Wies) bye; Ben Reinhaugh (4, Iseland) bye; Daniel Barlas (Heid) pin Luis Ortiz (Han) 11-8; Troy Price (Kais) pin Mike Burr (Wzbg) bye; Raymond Bratt (Wzbg) bye; Quarterfinals: Horst pin Surpris 3-0; Price pin Bowles 15:58; Surpris def. Burris 5-3; Bowles pin Barron 3:58. Saturday's semifinals: Horst-Price; Surpris-Bowles.

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SPORTS



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All for one



Illinois' Deron Williams, center, and his teammates get ready to take on Wisconsin on Feb. 12. The team, in its 11th straight week at No. 1, calls itself a family and says having fun doing a lot of things together off the court shows how well they fit together.

BY NANCY ARMOUR
The Associated Press

With no 'star',
Illini finds
off-court
bonding
contributes
to team unity,
successful run
atop rankings

The folks at Old Orchard Lanes have gotten used to seeing Illinois basketball players stop by over the years. It's usually only a player or two at a time, enough to draw attention at the small bowling alley south of campus but not so big a crowd to create a stir.

These days, though, something's different. The Illini still bowl, only now they do it in bunches. Seeing five or six members of the country's No. 1 team together is a given, and the group is sometimes even bigger than that.

"You'd think with a group of guys that spend that much time together, that they'd argue sometimes," said Kevin Davis, a manager at Old Orchard. "They're not like that at all. They always seem like they're having fun."

That's because, well, they are. "A family. That pretty much sums it up, we're a big family," senior forward Roger Powell Jr. said. "We have fun together. We do a lot of things off the court and it shows that we fit together. I think that's why we've had success."

CHAMPAIGN, ILL.

The Illini are in their 11th straight week at No. 1, the longest run since Kansas held the top spot for 15 weeks in 1996-97.

Illinois is the last unbeaten Division I team in the country at 26-0. The Illini are winning games by an average of 17.5 points, and have never trailed by double digits.

They've beaten seven Top 25 teams, including an 18-point rout of then-No. 1 Wake Forest that wasn't as close as the score indicated, and snapped Wisconsin's 38-game home winning streak that was the longest in the country.

Still, some people aren't quite sold. There's more talk about whether it's better for the Illini to lose a game before the NCAA tournament than their chances of becoming the first unbeaten team since the Indiana Hoosiers went 32-0 in 1975-76. Others wonder how Illinois' perfect record would hold up in the ACC.

"Everybody's waiting for us to lose, saying they think we're not the best team in the country," guard Dee Brown said. "Watch TV, they'll show you, they'll tell you. The No. 1 team? It's not us."

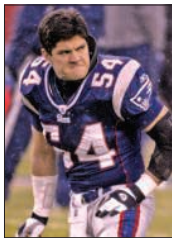
That's the beauty of the Illini, though. The reason Illinois is easy to overlook is the very thing that makes the team so special.

SEE ONE ON PAGE 32



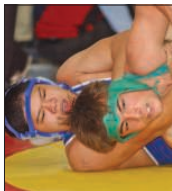
Hokies shock Duke, handing No. 7 Blue Devils fourth ACC loss

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Patriots' Bruschi recovering after mild stroke

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Returning DODDS-Europe champs don't get top seeds

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